

**THE LINGUISTIC COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ARABIC IN
OMAN:
THEIR IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION**

**BY
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DECLARATION

**I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY DECLARE THAT THIS
THESIS IS WRITTEN BY MYSELF AND ANY REFERENCES
MADE TO THE SOURCES ARE DULY ACKNOWLEDGED**

Sulaiman Saif Salmeen Al Ghattami

ABSTRACT

This study has been conducted to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the intermediate schools in the Sultanate of Oman. It suggests the use of a specific observation card to evaluate Arabic teachers according to their level of linguistic competencies. To achieve these objectives, the study has been divided into an Introduction and five chapters, followed by a general Conclusion. The Introduction presents the scope of the study and its importance, and raises the appropriate questions. Chapter One discusses the various elements of the teaching competencies movement, as well as its significance in teacher-training by reviewing the relevant literature. It also deals with the bases, classification and sources of the competencies. Chapter Two outlines the current status of Arabic teaching in Oman and its objectives. It then describes the importance of language in daily life and the educational system as a pedagogical subject. The chapter reviews the teacher-training programmes in Oman and examines their constituent elements. Chapter Three presents the practical aspect of the current study such as the samples and instruments for the collection of data and the methods followed to analyse the data. Chapter Four analyses the statistical results of the questionnaire, including the linguistic competencies. Chapter Five discusses and explains the results obtained. It also includes the additional comments made by the respondents to the questionnaire. The general Conclusion is devoted to summarizing the issues and findings of the study, as well as suggesting some improvements to the current system of teaching Arabic in Oman. Finally, it makes some recommendations which, it is hoped, will be useful in the planning of future teacher-training courses and will encourage further studies in this field.

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Introduction

This introduction explains the issues examined in the present study. First, it outlines the theoretical background to support the necessity for the study. The discussion of the pilot study is linked to the relevant questions. Finally, the Introduction gives the definitions of the terms frequently used and briefly describes the structure of the study.

0.1 Background to the Study

Education has an essential function in developing society and shaping its future, for it provides it with a potential force represented by those who should have acquired productive abilities as a result of their education (Ibrāhīm, 1984: 424), and who should be responsible for achieving progress and preserving the safety and security of the nation (Bishāra, 1986: 5). Moreover, “education is the engine of social progress and intelligence is its fuel” (Harris, 1981: 59). Language, being the medium through which individuals can express themselves and preserve their cultural and civil heritage, and the medium of communication and thought, has acquired a significant role in the daily life of humankind and is therefore considered the main means by which educational objectives and functions are achieved.

The Arabic language has the same function, which means that it currently enjoys a high status in education throughout the Arab world. Furthermore, it is the medium of instruction in all school subjects, except foreign languages. As a result, educators insist on improving its curricula and programmes whenever the opportunity arises in educational and linguistic research (Ghulūm, 1982: 6–7).

Hence, Arabic is so important that it must be taught by a teacher with a high degree of competency, who is characterized by a special ability to communicate his¹ message effectively. In this context, the teacher is the centre of the instructional process in the school, for he is the means by which educational objectives are achieved. He is also the primary factor in learner interaction in the classroom, which itself helps to achieve the desired objectives (al-Ghāfirī, 1995: 3).

In addition, the teacher takes on the responsibility of instructing the new generation. He should be an example to his pupils, influence their conduct and way of thinking, and guide the development of their ideals. His role is also to provide his pupils with information and skills, and train them to process these acquisitions into knowledge for application in real life ('Assās, 1994: 82). Certain factors widen the scope of the teacher's role, such as the increase in the number of pupils, educational improvements and the expansion of information. Although modern technology is now being used in both teaching and learning, instruction by itself cannot fulfil its function without a qualified teacher to communicate it effectively ('Īsān, 1995: 31; al-Bābṭīn, 1996: 23).

It is clear from the above that it is essential that teachers are trained to meet the challenge of new conditions or variables. Many international conferences have been held where case studies and issues relating to teacher-training have been discussed with the aim of increasing teacher efficiency. Many countries have also given much attention to analysing programmes to improve teacher-training (Mar'ī, 1983: 178; Wazzān, 1983: 11–12).

¹ The pronoun "he" and the possessive "his" are used in the present study to denote both male and female, although the possessive is mentioned in quotations.

Since “the general purpose of teacher education is to enable teachers to develop the skills and qualities that will increase their professional effectiveness” (Lynch & Plunkett, 1973: 53), teacher proficiency and academic training are considered important areas that urgently need improvement at the various stages of education. Furthermore, “teachers who possess both action system knowledge and subject matter knowledge² will be more effective than teachers who are deficient in one of these areas (Good & Brophy, 1987: 3). As a result, Wollin (1974: 343) states

The programme is successfully completed when candidates can demonstrate that they are competent to assume the role for which they have been prepared, i.e., they must provide satisfactory evidence, not only that they possess specified knowledge, but also that they can carry out in practice teaching tasks and functions and, in some cases, achieve learning outcomes with children.

Consequently, a number of studies have been conducted on a range of school subjects, one of which is Arabic, to identify the competencies required for teaching these subjects. These competencies are closely related to the pupils’ achievements, for any improvement in the pupils is dependent on the teacher’s qualifications and abilities (Wazzān, 1983: 13). In particular, it is essential to refresh the Arabic teacher’s knowledge and update his skills as new developments take place in his field. This includes linguistic competencies that the teacher should possess to enable his pupils to improve their language, which is the main ingredient of success in other school subjects (Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī, 1984: 26). This can be done by training the teacher according to the principles of competency-based teacher education. These

² “Subject matter knowledge includes the specific information teachers need to present content. Action system knowledge refers to skills for planning lessons, making decisions about lesson pace, explaining material clearly, and responding to individual differences in how students learn” (Good & Brophy, 1987: 3).

programmes concentrate on the teacher's performance in the classroom instead of merely providing him with theoretical knowledge and information relevant to his job (Jarādāt et al., n.d.: 33; Mar'ī, 1983: 177).

0.2 Importance of the Study

Competency is essential in teacher-training, as shown above. This is why much research has been conducted to investigate the competencies required for learning/teaching various school subjects, including Arabic. However, in Oman there has been a lack of such studies, especially in the teaching of Arabic. To the knowledge of the researcher, there has not been any study dealing specifically with the linguistic competencies at the intermediate stage. The only study in this area has been a document published in 1999 by the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman, stating the linguistic competencies necessary for teachers of the first stage of basic education (Wizārat al-Ta'lim al-'Alī, 1999: 8). A close examination of its contents has shown that the competencies mentioned are very general, very few and lacking any clear definition.

Al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001) conducted a study to identify the educational and linguistic competencies required for Arabic teachers in the first cycle of basic education³ and he used the findings as a basis for evaluating the performance of female teachers. His results showed that there was a weakness in the teachers' practice of the speaking and reading competencies. Although al-Ḥarrāṣī's research is very recent

³ This type of education in Oman is part of a reform begun in some schools as an experiment in 1998. Under the new system, basic education lasts for ten years and is divided into the first and second cycles consisting of four and six years respectively. Schools providing basic education are equipped with science and computer laboratories as well as resource centres (al-Belushi & al-Kitani, 1997: 109, 119; al-Manthri, 2001: 84).

and close to this study, it should be pointed out that the area that he has covered is limited to the first cycle of basic education and the relationship between the linguistic and educational competencies of that stage. Consequently, the need for the present study speaks for itself. Its aim is to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the intermediate stage in the Sultanate of Oman and to suggest an observation card for measuring the extent to which Arabic teachers possess these competencies.

Therefore, this study is considered important because it is hoped that it will be useful in the following ways:

1. The promotion of pre-service training programmes for Arabic teachers in the colleges of education in Oman by providing the Ministry of Higher Education and the decision-makers with a list of the main linguistic competencies required and an observation card. In the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University, for example, the current card, which is used for evaluating student teachers of Arabic in classroom practice and micro-teaching, concentrates on the general educational competencies, regardless of the specific competencies required for Arabic language ('Abd al-'Azīz, 1997: 86, 107–109).
2. The issuing to Arabic inspectors of an observation card that includes linguistic competencies for use along with the current card designed for the evaluation of Arabic teachers inside the classroom. As pointed out by Sitātiya et al. (1985: 127) and Ismā'īl (1991: 59), there is a lack of objective measuring tools for the evaluation of language learning/teaching. This

opinion is supported by the pilot study, which is covered in the next section of the Introduction.

3. With regard to the findings of many studies, such as those of ‘Abd al-Rāziq and al-Shibinī (1986: 94–95) and al-Ḥasan (1992: 4), there is an emphasis on the importance of the movement of competency-based teacher-training. The aim of this movement is to provide the student teacher of Arabic with the competencies required for efficient and competent instruction in the classroom. Despite the importance of these competencies, there is in Oman a lack of any studies in this field dealing specifically with the intermediate stage. Therefore, this study is the first of its kind in this area. It is hoped that it will pave the way for further studies of the other stages of school education and other school subjects.

0.3 The Pilot Study

The pilot study was designed to investigate the level of the linguistic competencies of Arabic teachers at the intermediate stage in Oman. This was achieved by finding out the extent to which the Arabic inspectors were satisfied with those teachers. Another objective was to find out whether there was a specific tool to evaluate the Arabic teachers in these competencies, and if it did not exist, the extent to which it was necessary. The pilot study was conducted during the second term of the academic year 1998/99, using a questionnaire designed with these purposes in mind.

The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by distributing it among five arbitrators (see Appendix 1.), who specialized in curriculum development and Arabic language teaching methodology at Sultan Qaboos University. The researcher met

them to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and ask for their opinion of the first draft and its suitability for achieving the researcher's objectives.

The ensuing discussion with the specialists resulted in several changes. The most important of their suggestions was to include some Arabic linguistic competencies at the beginning of the questionnaire to inform the respondents what they represented. Appendix 2. shows the final version of the questionnaire.

After the necessary revision, the researcher distributed 8 copies of the questionnaire to experts in curriculum and Arabic language teaching methodology, and 36 copies to Arabic inspectors in three regions of Oman: Muscat, Interior Region and al-Bāṭina North. This was done after obtaining the necessary permits from the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education (see Appendix 3.). When the questionnaires were collected, 10 had apparently been lost and 4 were cancelled because they were incomplete. So there remained 30 questionnaires for analysis.

The results of the first question, regarding the standard of Arabic teachers in their mastery of linguistic competencies, are shown in Table 0.1. According to the table, most of the answers fall into the category of "good", which suggests that the general standard of Arabic teachers is only good. It may also indicate that the Arabic inspectors are not completely satisfied with the Arabic teachers. Perhaps the standard allocated to the Arabic teachers is due to their lack of knowledge of the linguistic competencies. Therefore, it seems that their standard needs to be improved and their linguistic competencies developed. The first step in this direction is to

identify the competencies required for teaching Arabic, which itself supports the necessity of this study.

Table 0.1 Standard of Arabic teachers

Linguistic Aspect	Very Good		Good		Weak	
	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
Reading	16	53.3	14	46.7	0	0.0
Literary Texts	5	16.7	23	76.7	2	6.6
Grammar	14	46.7	14	46.7	2	6.6
Written Composition	9	30.0	18	60.0	3	10.0
Oral Composition	9	30.0	16	53.3	5	16.7
Dictation & Punctuation	14	46.7	15	50.0	1	3.3
Handwriting	2	6.7	19	63.3	9	30.0

The second question, regarding the availability of an observation card specifically for use in evaluating Arabic teachers, produced data confirming that no such card including linguistic competencies was currently available. The school inspectors used only a general card, regardless of the nature of an individual subject, see Appendix 4.

Among the reasons for the lack of a specific card, according to the respondents, were the following:

- There was no list of the most important linguistic competencies owing to the absence of research in this field in Oman. This led to a dependence on the existing general card to evaluate Arabic teachers.
- The lack of experience of some of the Arabic inspectors in evaluating Arabic teachers' competencies meant that the designing of a specific card had been neglected.

As a result, 73 per cent of the respondents thought that it was very necessary to design such a card. Among the reasons given were:

- The necessity of knowing the linguistic competencies which the teachers do and do not possess so that the appropriate training programmes can be devised.
- The fact that the card currently available does not include the linguistic competencies required to teach the Arabic language.
- The importance of creating a special observation card for linguistic competencies, which could be used as a yardstick by the Omani education authorities to investigate the level of successful teaching of the Arabic language.

In conclusion, the results of the pilot study clearly showed that the linguistic competencies of Arabic teachers at the intermediate stage was generally below the level of “very good” in most aspects of the Arabic language. The researcher thinks that the most important reason for this situation is the Arabic teachers’ lack of knowledge of the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic, which, in turn, is due to the lack of a list of these competencies. Therefore, it is essential to compile such a list. The pilot study also highlighted the importance of an appropriate observation card to evaluate the performance of Arabic teachers in Oman. The present study aims to examine all these issues.

0.4 Questions of the Study

From the above discussion and the results of the pilot study, this thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the importance of the competency-based teacher-education movement in training teachers of Arabic?
2. What is the current situation of teacher-training in Oman?
3. What is the current status of Arabic teaching in Oman?
4. What are the linguistic competencies required for teaching the various linguistic aspects of Arabic at the intermediate stage in Oman?
5. What are the most and least important of these competencies as perceived by a group of Arabic teachers, Arabic inspectors and Arabic curriculum experts in Oman?
6. How can the observation card, which will be suggested in this study, be developed for evaluating the extent to which these competencies are possessed by Arabic teachers at the intermediate stage?

0.5 Operational Definitions

The terminology most commonly used in this study is as follows:

- **Intermediate stage:** three academic years following the elementary stage (six years) and preceding the secondary stage (three years). This stage is equivalent to “al-marḥala al-i‘dādiyya” which is translated as “preparatory stage” in the documents of the Ministry of Education in Oman. The usual age of the pupils at this stage ranges from 13 to 15. This stage is part of the former educational system used in Oman, because the new system (basic education) as stated above, is applied to the first cycle, which covers Primary 1 to Primary 4.
- **Linguistic competency:** a body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that every teacher at the intermediate stage needs to possess so as to be sufficiently qualified

and capable of improving his pupils' abilities and enabling them to achieve effectively the required linguistic objectives.

- **Linguistic aspects:** those which represent the elements of the Arabic curriculum. Each of the aspects is treated separately to facilitate the teaching/learning of Arabic, although they are normally integrated. These aspects total eight, as follows: Listening, Reading, Literary Texts, Oral Composition, Written Composition, Grammar, Dictation and Punctuation, and Arabic Calligraphy.
- **Behavioural objectives:** statements of intent that are much more precise than aims and more observable (Gronlund, 1978: 6). They also “attempt to describe in the clearest terms possible, exactly what a pupil will think, act or feel at the end of a learning experience” (Davies, 1976: 14–15). In this context, the linguistic competencies in the present study represent behavioural objectives since they are translated into statements that can be observed and measured.
- **Observation card:** the tool suggested for evaluating the extent to which Arabic teachers possess the linguistic competencies required at the intermediate stage.

0.6 Outline of the Chapters

To answer the questions listed above and discuss the related issues, the study is divided into five chapters, followed by a general conclusion as well as some suggestions and recommendations. The subject of each chapter is treated from the theoretical or practical aspects according to the classification of the questions as shown below.

Chapter One discusses the various elements of the teaching competencies movement as well as the importance of this movement by reviewing the relevant literature. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section examines the teaching competencies movement as a noteworthy trend in teacher-training. The second section deals with the bases, classification and sources of competencies.

Chapter Two presents an outline of the teaching of the Arabic language in Oman and its linguistic competencies. It is divided into four main sections. The first describes the characteristics of the Arabic language to extract its linguistic competencies. The introduction outlines the importance of language in daily life and in the educational system as a pedagogical subject. This section also discusses the characteristics of language in general and Arabic in particular. In the second section, the role of the teacher in contemporary times is examined, with special attention given to the influence of recent educational developments. The third section looks at the current status of Arabic language teaching in Oman. It also reviews the teacher-training programmes in Oman from the historical perspective. In addition, it examines the constituent elements of the Arabic language teaching curriculum, its philosophy and objectives, with regard to the theoretical background of each aspect of Arabic.

Chapter Three represents the practical side of the study and is based on the previous two chapters. It concentrates on the following related issues: (1) identifying the population and the samples selected for data collection; (2) developing the two instruments – the questionnaire and the observation card used for data collection – by describing their purposes, sources, validity, and their first and final versions; (3)

presenting the application of the questionnaire; and (4) describing the statistical procedures and treatment required for the analysis of the data.

Chapter Four analyses the statistical results of the questionnaire, which included the linguistic competencies for eight aspects of teaching Arabic: Listening, Reading, Literary Texts, Oral Composition, Written Composition, Grammar, Dictation and Punctuation, and Arabic Calligraphy. The statistical results are followed by the classification of items in each aspect according to their level of importance. The items in each level of importance are then classified according to the relevant ideas and topics.

Chapter Five discusses the results given in Chapter Four. The discussion and interpretation of the results are guided by the relevant literature. At the end of the chapter are included the additional comments and suggestions made by the respondents to the open question in the questionnaire. The plan of the discussion is based on the classification of the items described in Chapter Four.

The conclusion of the study summarizes the issues and findings examined and is followed by some suggestions for improving the current system of teaching linguistic aspects of Arabic at the intermediate stage in Oman. Finally, it lists some recommendations which, it is hoped, will be useful in planning future teacher-training programmes suitable for teaching the linguistic competencies and in encouraging further studies in this field.

The Competencies Movement and its Importance

Introduction

Education is considered the basis for developing human resources in any country. It is also regarded as a long-term investment rather than an immediate service activity. Oman, as a developing country, has been acting on these premises for some years, building a modern society upon the principles of education and the belief that carefully planned education is a foundation of the economic and social development of society (‘Abd al-Rāziq & al-Shibīnī, 1986: 47). Therefore, “in changing times, unchanging schools are anomalous. Competency-based education promises the thrust necessary for adaptation to meet the challenge of a changed and changing society” (Howsam & Houston, 1972: 1).

In an attempt to improve education in general, and to assist teachers in meeting the rapidly changing needs of society, educationalists continually search for alternative means to improve teacher competency (Loheyde, 1977: 12). Furthermore, many professional educationalists today espouse the need to place more emphasis on the assessment of individual teachers and their performance in the classroom, highlighting the importance of integrating theory with practice. Overall, they insist, the focus should be on actual objectives (Jones, 1972: 102–103).

In the 1960s, many educational researchers focussed their work on teaching competencies. Recently the research has broadened to involve the observation of teachers inside the classroom, and to analyse teaching behaviours that are related to

teaching competencies. Research concerning competencies is a dynamic area of investigation, bearing fruitful results, with major relevance to teaching and teacher education. Thus, the findings are important to classroom teachers, researchers, curriculum specialists and theorists. Although numerous studies have investigated general teaching competencies, very little attention has been paid to linguistic competencies. Therefore, the present study seeks to determine, in an empirical manner, the linguistic competencies essential for teachers of Arabic.

Richards (1990: 42) notes “The classroom is seen as a place where there is ongoing and dynamic interaction between the teacher’s instructional goals, learners’ purposes, classroom tasks and activities, the teacher’s instructional activities and behaviour, student behaviour in completing assigned tasks, and learning outcomes”. Teachers of Arabic, as a result, can use the techniques of classroom research to examine the learning activities that take place in their classrooms. They can also monitor accurately both their behaviour and that of their pupils.

Teachers cannot expect to do a good job if they do not master, to a high degree, the subject matters that they are employed to teach. Teaching Arabic as an independent subject places many special demands on teachers. For example, they must adjust, from time to time, their instructional plans and procedures in order to accommodate differences in the capabilities of their pupils. They must also make their voice loud and clear enough for all the pupils, and speaking at a level comprehensible to all.

If teachers of Arabic are to respond successfully to such demands, they will have to acquire a number of specific competencies, to help them perform their duties

efficiently in the classroom. A teacher's success depends on his possession of a number of teaching competencies, and on exhibition of these competencies throughout the lesson. Related to this, Carr (1993: 254) states: "we need teachers who are not just knowledgeable or well-informed about education, but whose knowledge and understanding is expressed, or exhibited, in their abilities - teachers, in short, who are competent by virtue of the intelligent application of their knowledge and understanding in effective practice".

It will be the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to discuss the various elements in the teaching competencies movement, as well as the importance of the movement as a whole by reviewing the literature related to the present study. This chapter is divided into three major sections. In the first I will examine the teaching competencies movement as an important trend in teacher education. The second section will deal with bases, classification, and sources of competencies. I will present my conclusion on the surveyed literature in the third section.

1.1 The Teaching Competencies Movement as an Important Educational Trend

1.1.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this section is to examine the teaching competencies movement as an important educational trend in teacher education. It will be divided into five subheadings. The first deals with the roots of the movement including a historical perspective on it. The second provides descriptions of theoretical terms relative to the teaching competencies movement. The third focuses on the growth factors of this movement. The fourth presents the assumptions of the movement, and the final subheading concerns itself with the various criticisms aimed at it.

1.1.2 Roots and Historical Perspective of the Teaching Competencies Movement

The competencies movement originated as a reaction to the failure of traditional trends in teacher education, which were concerned with providing teachers with a certain amount of general education and some specific and simple practical training (Abu al-Samīd, 1985: 51). At that time, a good teacher was no more than a person who had mastered the basics of a certain subject, and who therefore felt him to be capable of transmitting this subject matter to the learner. This view of teaching was coupled with another view concerning the aims of education. The focus then was on gaining knowledge and, to this end, the teacher was to provide the learner with the optimum amount of information. As a result, the role of the teacher was limited to transmitting knowledge from a few sources, which included textbooks for the learners. Hence, teacher efficiency and success were measured in terms of the extent the learner memorised and retained such knowledge. Teaching then was a task that any person could perform (‘Abd al-Rāziq & al-Shibīnī, 1986: 82).

Educational thought, however, has changed, and the impact of the change has been felt in the teaching process, and in the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher is no longer a mere transmitter of information. It has become necessary for the teacher to acquire a breadth of knowledge in additional areas, such as curriculum theories and their development, strategies and management of instruction, and use of instructional media and materials. These changing views on educational practices have given rise to questions pertaining to teacher education. Chief among these is a series of questions relating to the characteristics of the effective teacher and teaching (ibid.: 82).

As a result, a number of modern trends have emerged in the field of education, which are concerned with the improvement of teaching training by concentrating on the preparation and evaluation of teaching according to new educational principles. Among these trends is the teaching competencies movement. This is a movement which has made the improvement of teachers' competencies its main aim, because it considers that the most important task of the educational process is to establish the types of competencies relevant to the job of the teacher, and to provide teachers with a well-planned guide in fulfilling their duties, and in their professional development (Sa'āda, 1986: 81). This is because the teacher is usually considered as one of the most important variables in the process of teaching. Consequently, the teacher's competency has a special significance, which has commanded the attention of researchers for several decades (Şādiq & Abu Ḥaṭab, 1994: 786).

Although competency-based education, as stated by Stoffle and Pryor (1980), is seen today as a new approach, it has antecedents that go back to the late nineteenth century in a variety of educational movements, including those concerned with efficiency in general education, vocational education, progressive education, and instructional technology (p. 55). Moreover, competency-based teacher education, according to McAleavy and McAleer (1991: 21), is not a recent development, for it is generally agreed that competency-based education had its roots in teacher education in the U.S.A. during the 1960s (see also Tuxworth, 1989: 11). Houston (1974: 5; 1985: 900) also thinks that the roots of the competencies movement can be traced back to the last years of the nineteenth century in the U.S.A. particularly with regard to the training of nurses, engineers, lawyers and librarians, in a number

of American universities, and in the teaching of social and natural sciences and humanities in the British Open University (see also 'Abd al-Mu'tī, 1988: 98).

This new movement or trend first appeared in the U.S.A. as a direct reaction against the failure of traditional education in effectively fulfilling its aims. It was only in the 1960s that educationalists began to speak and write explicitly about teaching competencies and the new programmes related to it. Loyheyde (1977: 13), for instance, states that this movement emerged in the 1960s as an alternative way in preparing teachers. These programmes spread quickly throughout the U.S.A., and were used in most of the colleges of teacher education there from the early 1970s onwards (Day, 1974: 40).

Furthermore, as shown by Houston (1974: 3), the movement toward competency-based education now permeates every aspect of American education. Dickson (1979: 19) also presents evidence supporting the spread of the competency movement in the United States. He reports that, in January 1977, sixteen states had some form of competency requirements. By September of the same year, the number of such states had risen to 26, and by the time of his study, that figure has increased to more than 30. Therefore, the use of the principle of competencies as a basis for the education and training of teachers has become commonly accepted (Reynolds & Salters, 1995: 349). It is now one of the most prominent features of education in many countries throughout the world (al-Dīb, 1997: 96–97).

It has also spread into other fields. As recently as 1995, Bates pointed out that the current importance of competency in Britain stems, in large part, from the fact that competency and outcomes have become constituent concepts in the

emerging system of National Vocation Qualifications (NVQs). All British vocational qualifications - across schools, further and higher education - are based on the principle of competency (p. 6). According to Jones and Moore (1993: 385), the competency trend is “increasingly influential in a variety of other areas concerned with the management of the person, especially with [the National Council for Vocational Qualifications] NCVQ’s current review of graduate entry level occupations”. Through NCVQ, as stated by Hodkinson and Issitt (1995: 1), “the emphasis on qualification has moved away from the notion that preparation for effective practice involves the right kind of training ‘inputs’ on or off the job. The shift to competence-based assessment has been towards ‘outputs’”. Reynolds and Salters (1995: 349) also say that, by 1986, the Government and the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in Britain were referring to competency as the objective of training and as the measure of assessment.

In Oman the NVQ system has been established and is used for training in vocational education and training. This system is equivalent to a secondary education qualification for students over 16 years of age, who wish to keep their options open, either to move into higher education or seek employment. The NVQ system, then, forms a bridge between the vocational and academic systems of education. To improve the quality of vocational education it is imperative to improve the competency of vocational school teachers (Ministry of Information, 1999: 184–185).

It is possible to trace back the roots of the teaching competencies movement to the behaviourist school (Şalāḥ, 1988: 44) from the early 1910s (Skinner, 1974:

5), which thinks that human behaviour can be analysed into small elements, capable of being reshaped. Among the outcomes of this school are the behavioural objectives upon which the competencies movement depends ('Abd al-Rāziq & al-Shibīnī, 1986: 83). The idea of behavioural objectives spread later on from the United States to Britain, and was used in teacher education. To explain this point, Hyland (1994: 49) states that competency-based vocational education, when it first appeared in the UK, was a good example of a system using behavioural objectives.

The teaching competencies movement is one of the contemporary trends in the field of teacher education, which has clear connections to behaviourism and educational technology. Burns (1972: 32) emphasises the importance of this movement, stating that competency-based teacher education today is an innovation which is still growing in influence. It seems certain that most traditional teacher programmes will either change significantly, or disappear, within the next few years. McDonald (1972: 74) also shows that "the basic concepts of competency-based education are widely accepted today, and there is widespread interest in the changes needed to make teacher education programs focus on the acquisition of teaching competency". Furthermore, as stated by Finch and Crunkilton (1989: 241), competency-based education has been shown to be most effective as an alternative to conventional forms of education over the past decade.

The teaching competency movement began to claim attention in Arabic countries early in the 1980s. Since then, many studies have been carried out concerning the competencies required for teachers. These can be seen to fall into two groups. On the one hand, studies investigating general competencies, which are

considered necessary for every teacher, regardless of the subject matter that he teaches; and, on the other hand, investigation of specific competencies related to the subject matter taught (Aḥmad, 1990: 134). This movement has become one of the most important modern trends in educational circles for solving the problems inherent in teacher education.

We can now deal with some of the theoretical terms used by the teaching competencies movement.

1.1.3 Theoretical Terms Relevant to the Teaching Competencies Movement

The teaching competencies movement is intimately connected with a number of technical terms, which are similar in meaning, a fact which has led to some ambiguity and confusion in their use. Therefore, in order to distinguish between these terms, and show how far they are related to the concept of competency itself, we need to define each term. Among the most important of these terms are “skill”, “teacher’s performance”, “behavioural objectives”, and “competency” itself.

1.1.3.1 Skill

The first term, “skill”, has been dealt with by many writers and researchers. Some of them see it as an equivalent to the term “competency” itself. For example, Ibrāhīm (1988: 84–85) points out that many studies have treated teaching skill under various names such as: “competencies”, “mastery”, or “teaching skills”.

This variation in terminology and definitions will be apparent from a small selection of commentaries. Good (1945: 373) defines “teaching skill” as “the ability to promote learning, developed through appropriate preparation and experience and

facilitated by natural aptitude”. But, according to McDonald (1974: 20), “skill”, in general, means proficiency in performance. Mujāwir (1974: 16) considers skill from a psychological and educational point of view, and defines it as an ability possessed by man, by which he can perform some complex and dynamic actions with ease, precision and adaptation to changing circumstances. It is usually evaluated and judged by the results reached. Mujāwir (1974) also thinks that “Ability” is judged as a group of skills, and “skill” is viewed, in its turn, as an aptitude or power, which assists in acquiring the ability. Reading ability, for example, comprises the skills of comprehension, speed, analysis, criticism, judgement, inference and so on (p. 16).

Sa’d (1983: 38–39) presents two kinds of “skill”: “general skill”, and “teaching skill”. He thinks that the first shows itself in the ease and precision with which a certain action is performed. It grows as a result of the learning process, whereas the second means easy performance of a number of actions, which are operationally defined.

Al-Khaṭīb (1988: 108) defines “skill” as an action, physical or intellectual, that an individual has learned to perform, with understanding, ease and precision. Yūsuf (1988: 12) distinguishes between “educational skill” and “skill in teaching”. He sees the first as the ability to perform a complex and dynamic work with ease, and the second as the performance of a number of operationally defined works, and capable of being observed. Ṣalāḥ (1988: 45) sees “skill” as a physical or intellectual performance with a high degree of understanding, familiarity, and precision with the minimum of effort and time.

We can see, then, that the concept of “skill” has received a number of definitions, but with some common features. All the foregoing definitions agree that “skill” is the performance of certain works with ease, precision, and economy that it can be observed and evaluated, and that it grows as a result of learning or training. Thus, “skill” comprises some basic elements, namely mastery, comprehension, speed and precision.

On the other hand, some of the above definitions deal with aspects ignored by others. We find that Mujāwir, for example, identifies “skill” with ability, and sees the first as part of the second. In turn, Ṣalāḥ and al-Khaṭīb concentrate on the physical or intellectual form in which this skill is performed. Good (1945) alone thinks that “skill” requires some natural aptitude enjoyed by the individual. Therefore, we can say that teaching skill represents the performance aspect, whereas the term “competency” includes, with the performance aspect, the knowledge and attitude proper to the work. Yet, some writers use the term “skill” as a synonym term to “competency”.

1.1.3.2 Teacher's performance

‘Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ (1986: 46) sees this term as referring to the behaviour of the teacher during the process of teaching, including his real performance within the teaching situation, and the work he prepares for meeting that situation. In his study, Ṣalāḥ (1988: 46–47) regards the performance as the teacher's behaviour, covering all that he says and does within the teaching situation, a performance which is both observable and measurable.

This means that “performance” is the surface behaviour of the teacher during the process of teaching, something which can be observed and measured. It seems, therefore, that this definition, or concept, is different from that of “competency”. For “competency”, it is not confined to the surface behaviour during performance, but also includes knowledge and attitude.

However, the debate still rages as to the use of the two terms performance and competency. Some writers prefer the first, while others prefer the second. Still others use the two terms as synonymous. Each group supports its view with some evidence.

For example, Elam (1971: 5–6), one who prefers the term “performance”, argues, under the title *Performance-Based or Competency-Based?*, that

The term itself is a focus of disagreement. Some authorities prefer “competency-based teacher education” suggesting that it is a more comprehensive concept. In determining competency, ... three types of criteria may be used: (1) Knowledge criteria, to assess the cognitive understandings of the student; (2) performance criteria, to assess the teaching behaviour of the student; and (3) product criteria to assess the student’s ability to teach by examining the achievement of pupils taught by the student. The term “performance-based” tends to focus attention on criterion, although the proponents of PBTE [performance-based teacher education] do not mean so to limit the concept. The AACTE [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education] committee on Per-B-TE has chosen to retain the term “performance-based” in the belief that the adjective itself is relatively unimportant if there is consensus on what elements are essential to distinguish performance or competency-based programmes from other programmes.

In contrast, those who favour “competency-based”, such as Lindsey (1973), state that the term “performance” is a limiting one, and should be replaced by the

term “competency”. It is competency that professional educationalists are expected to possess and demonstrate, including performance plus knowledge, attitudes¹ and values² which are relevant to performance (ibid.: 186). In a similar vein, Massanari (1973: 244) also prefers the term “competency-based” and supports his preference by pointing out that the term “competency” is broader in scope, and includes knowledge, performance and outcomes learning. It also implies, in his opinion, a dimension of quality as far as teacher behaviour is concerned.

In addition to these writers, there are several researchers who constantly use the term “competency” in their writings. Among them are Houston and Howsam (1972), Stieglitz (1972), Dodl and Schalock (1973), Merwin (1974), Torshen (1977), Dickson (1979), Methakunavudhi (1980), Tuxworth (1989) and Carr (1993).

Those who use both terms, (CBTE) and (PBTE), for convenience consider them to be synonymous or interchangeable, so each of them associates with the other. For example, Burdin and Mathieson (1972) use both terms interchangeably, as though “competency” and “performance” are the same thing. Broder (1974) uses the terms synonymously even he uses (CBTE) exclusively for the purposes of his study. Kay (1975) too uses them interchangeably, indicating no difference between “competency” and “performance”. Broudy (1974), although using these terms

1 Attitudes might be defined as “an internal feeling, a conviction, or a persistent inclination to act in a given manner toward an idea, person, or event” (Burns, 1972: 29).

2 Values are “the collective principles or ideals which the society believes in, takes pride in and continues to practice” (al-Khaṭīb 1988: 137). They are viewed as essential for practice and are understood to have an essential role in competent practice, because they influence how teachers act in relation to their professional role. Examples of these values might be that the teacher should be enthusiastic about teaching and accept professional responsibility (Reynolds, 1995: 253, 285, 475).

interchangeably, thinks that there may still be useful study to be done to differentiate “competency” from “performance”.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that the current study should use the term “competency-based”, as it is more comprehensive, rather than “performance”.

1.1.3.3 Behavioural objective

It appears that the relationship between behavioural objectives and competency is a very close one. This can be shown through a review of what has been written about this subject in the literature.

In 1972, Houston and Howsam exposed the connection between competencies and objectives, stating that competency-based instruction (CBI) begins with identification of the specific competencies that are the objectives of the learner. They are objectives stated in behavioural terms (p. 4). According to Kay (1975: 5), definitions of teaching competencies range from highly specific behavioural objectives, delineating all the knowledge, skills and attitudes deemed necessary for effective teaching, to more generally stated goals reflecting various functions that the teacher needs to perform.

Among the major writers who deal with this topic are Hall and Jones (1976). They draw a distinction between goals, competencies, and objectives in order to reveal the close relationships between them. They state that goals are the expected outcomes of a CBE programme. At the opposite end of the continuum from goals are objectives, the most specific formal statements made about expected learning outcomes. Competencies, meanwhile, lie in the mid-range of the continuum. This means that competencies should be more specific than goals, sub-competencies more

specific than competencies, and objectives more specific than sub-competencies. In other words, goals encompass competencies, and sub-competencies encompass objectives (ibid.: 27–29).

In order to illustrate the relationships between previous terms, Hall and Jones (1976) give us examples related to teaching in the field of language. They show that the goal of language instruction is to enable all educated persons to communicate successfully, and that one of the necessary competencies based on this goal is the competency of writing. The aim of this last competency is to teach the pupils to “write” well, which might be seen as an impossible task. What the teacher can do is to select an area of sub-competency, for example, in the area of writing, to help the pupil focus on writing paragraphs that include topic sentences. The specific objective is that “the student should write a short essay, comparing any two stories, with respect to realism, relevance, and mood. Each paragraph in the essay should contain a topic sentence” (ibid.: 30).

In his turn, al-Ḥasan (1992: 86) thinks that competency-based education has been influenced by the idea of behavioural objectives in instruction, and that this influence is obvious in the fact that competency-based programmes should have clear and behavioural ends, and have teaching outcomes which are observable and measurable and achievable. This clearly shows that the behavioural objectives form the core of competency-based education. Some educationalists have therefore tended to define competency as behavioural objectives formulated with precision.

This strong relationship between competencies and objectives has also been supported by Torshen (1977: 29), who indicated that whenever an educational

programme is planned, the competencies are immediately transformed into objectives.

Among the other writers who have supported this view are Johnson, et al (1982). To them, competencies have to deal with knowledge objectives, skills, and professional attitude objectives. Therefore, behavioural objectives are tools that, when used with competency, can do much to improve teaching and learning (ibid.: 188). For these reasons, Sullivan and Higgins (1983: 9) have stated in a book entitled *Teaching for Competence* that the term “competency” is commonly used as a synonym for instructional objectives in competency-based instruction (CBI).

1.1.3.4 Competency

From a historical perspective, Dodl (1973: 194) indicated that the term “competency” was not new. He then added that Lucien Kinney, in cooperation with the California Council on Teacher Education, had used the term in a study that he published as early as 1952, under the title “Measure of a Good Teacher”. But the use of this term became more common with the spreading of CBTE at the end of 1960s.

Yet, in spite of the widespread use of the term “competency”, there is considerable confusion and equivocation about what “competency” actually means. Howsam and Houston (1972: 3–4) show that “The term *competency-based* has become a special designation for an educational approach, for a movement. The term cannot be defined in a simple phrase; its meaning emerges from the complex of characteristics of this educational mode. Further clarification may arise through efforts to determine what it is not”. In the same way, Hollis et al (1978: 9) point out

that the identification and definition of competency tend to be vague and somewhat ambiguous.

Borich (1979) also declares that “competency is an imprecise term, even to those who use it frequently. While it appears in the training literature repeatedly, its use and interpretation vary widely, and the list of synonyms is long. For example, terms such as teacher behaviour, teacher variable, teacher performance and teacher skill have been used interchangeably with the term teacher competency” (ibid.: 77). Moreover, McAleavey and McAleer (1991: 20) state that “there is no agreed definition of the term competency”. As shown by Short (1985: 2) and Hyland (1994: 22) this term has different meanings to different people, and both employers and educationalists have found “competency” strangely difficult to define.

It seems from what has been said above that it is difficult to define what the meaning of “competency” is. However, many researchers have attempted to present a definition of this term, by listing some characteristic and essential components of the concept to which this term refers. As shown by Elam (1971: 22), “competency” is a potentially superior strategy for developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the teacher which are necessary to facilitate pupil learning. Dodl (1973: 194) states that

Recent literature has produced several definitions of *competency*. It is mainly used in the plural and in conjunction with *teacher*. Teacher competencies are variously defined as “... attitudes, understandings, skills, and behaviours that facilitate intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in children”; “... functional abilities which teachers

demonstrate in their day-to-day job-related activity”; and “... demonstrated ability to perform the functions required in a certified teaching position”³.

Hollis et al (1978: 6) have also presented us with similar definitions. They stated that “competency is a broad and general statement of expected knowledge, skills, attitudes and consequences that are derived from the programme planners’ conception of teacher roles”. According to Dickson (1979: 18), competency includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed by the teacher.

As noted in Feldman’s study (1978), “ A Competency-Based Teacher Education Programme for Education of Teachers of The Speech and Hearing Handicapped”, *competency* is defined as “knowledge, skills, and attitude that can be demonstrated in a clinical educational setting” (p. 84). Wazzān (1983: 22–23) defines “competency” as the highest level that a teacher can achieve regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes, within the field of teaching his subject matter.

Hyland (1994) also presents a group of general definitions of the same term, for example: “competency is concerned with what people can do, rather than with what they know”; and “competency embraces the possession and development of sufficient skills, knowledge, appropriate attitudes and experience for successful performance in life role” (p. 23).

In an article entitled “Models of Competency and Teacher Training” by Reynolds and Salters, published in 1995, we find Brezinka (1988) defining *competency* as “the ability to do what is required, and to do it well” (p. 355).

³ Dodle quotes these definitions from different writers.

Likewise, McNamara (1992) and Carr (1993) tell us that “The basic traditional meaning of the term competency has been that of capacity: *what a person can do*” (see Tomlinson 1995: 181).

On the other hand, al-Laqqānī and al-Jamal (1999) regard teaching competency as “a group of knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes which the student acquires, through some training based on a certain teaching programme, and which in turn directs his behaviour, and raises his performance to the level of mastery, so that he feels able to do his job with ease and precision” (p. 191).

As can be seen from the above review of competency definitions, some of them present competency and performance as inter-connected. Others relate competency to the roles of teachers, or to the learning outcomes of pupils. In other words, these definitions deal with the functions of teaching, and the teacher’s capacity to fulfil his task, without neglecting the part played by the learner in achieving the results desired.

In the light of the definitions quoted above, we can summarise some of the characteristics and elements that the term “competency” seems to comprise as follows. Firstly, it includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or orientations that a teacher needs to acquire in order to fulfil his task. These are components, or ingredients, which require a certain level of performance during the process of teaching, and should lead to certain results or outcomes. Here, we may distinguish between three kinds of competencies which every teacher needs: cognitive competencies, performance competencies, and affective competencies. Secondly, in the relationship of competency to the role of the teacher and his tasks in the

classroom, competency consists in a certain behaviour expressed through physical gestures, actions and statements during the fulfilment of the teaching task. Thirdly, competency is also related to the teacher's ability to fulfil his job, since teacher competencies include all his abilities for meeting the requirements of the teaching profession.

As a result, we can offer here an operational definition of competency, which meets the purpose of the present study. From my own perspective, competency is a body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which every teacher needs to possess in order to be capable and qualified to improve the ability of his pupils for enabling them to achieve effectively the linguistic objectives stated to reach. This body is made up of behavioural objectives that can be both observed and evaluated.

We can also clearly see, now, that "skill", "teacher performance", "behavioural objective", and "competency" are terms closely connected with each other, and with the competency movement in teaching. Each term seems to represent an aspect or a characteristic of this movement.

1.1.4 Reasons for the Growth of the Teaching Competency Movement

As we have already pointed out, the teaching competency movement originated as a reaction to the traditional education of teachers which focused on knowledge alone, and failed, therefore, to fulfil the purposes required of it. The movement emerged to offer a solution to some of the educational problems, particularly in the area of teacher preparation, training and evaluation. It did not emerge as a result of one single factor, but as a result of several factors, the most important of which were the

developments that occurred in the fields of education, psychology, technology and management.

The following is a brief survey of those factors which led directly or indirectly to the emergence of this movement.

1.1.4.1 Criticism Directed at Traditional Programmes of Teacher Education

In the last years of the 20th century, teacher education programmes began to rely heavily upon the principle of competency, as a result of the failures of traditional programmes to produce well-qualified teachers who could carry out the duties of teaching successfully and efficiently. These programmes were concerned more with the theoretical than the practical aspects of teacher education, and were found remote from the demands of the classroom (Haynes and Coyne 1971: 70).

Elam (1971) reported that traditional teacher education programmes were not producing people equipped to teach minority group. Both children and young people have effectively and directly pointed to the need for reform in teacher education. Moreover, the claim of minority group that there should be alternative routes to professional status has raised serious questions about the suitability of the generally recognised teacher education programmes. Much traditional teacher education can best be described as experience-based. That is, it assumes that if a student who plans to teach experiences a specified number of courses in particular areas of study and undergoes some kind of student teaching experience, he is ready to begin teaching (ibid.: 1–2). In a similar vein, Combs (1972: 289) described traditional teacher education as teaching students about teaching, rather than helping them to become successful teachers.

The primary demand, until the late 1960s, on teacher education institutions as shown by Hall and Jones (1976) was to produce quantity. Teachers were needed at that time in the U.S.A to fill up the job market in the face of an ever-expanding enrolment in public schools. As a result, the faculties at teacher education institutions were occupied in producing large numbers of teachers, without adequate sources or enough time to assess the jobs they or the graduates were doing (p: 3).

One of the major reviews of literature on the proficiency of traditional teacher education was carried out by Pigge (1978: 74), in which he reported that the literature abounds with criticisms of the apparent lack of effectiveness of teacher education institutions. Rice (1976: 28–29) also pointed out that research has already shown that teacher preparation institutions have failed to meet the challenge of dealing effectively with the problems encountered in daily classroom situations.

The above mentioned criticism of the traditional teaching programmes, and the low level of teachers' qualifications, led researchers to look for a suitable solution, and out of this situation emerged the competency movement, as a major answer to the problem. In this regard Houston and Howsam (1972: 6–7) and Rice (1976: 24) state that, while the focus in traditional teacher education was on cognitive competency, in competency-based teacher education the focus has shifted to include performance and consequence competencies. The teacher must, therefore, not only know a good deal about teaching, but must also be able to teach, and initiate change in his pupils' thinking and attitudes.

1.1.4.2 The Development of Educational Technology

Technological development is regarded by educationalists as one of the most important factors leading to the emergence of the teaching competency movement and its development. The changes and innovations which were produced by modern technology, as represented in new systems and equipment and new work planning together with the application of new theories in various practical fields of teaching, also had a profound influence on education and educational trends, with the result that new concepts began to appear and develop among educationalists and other people concerned with education. Among these new concepts we may mention: programmed teaching, micro teaching, instructional individualisation, feedback, and behavioural objectives. Education also benefited from the establishment of educational laboratories, the use of videos, cinemas, overhead projectors and images, and other modern technological facilities (al-Hasan, 1992: 84–85).

The importance of the educational technology is emphasised by Paine (2001: 194) who states that

if it [Information and Communications Technology “ICT”] is managed well, the pupil will be working increasingly in an environment which is information-rich and delivered through multimedia. This means that he or she will have access to more information than was previously available, in a more immediate and colourful way. It will encourage the pupil to analyse that information, to make sense of it, and to interpret it, and it will also give him or her a number of skills in searching and gathering relevant information from disparate sources.

It was inevitable, therefore, that educational institutions should engage with and make use of these huge changes and innovations, created by modern scientific

methods and technology and take notice of their impact on all aspects of life, social, economical, administrative and industrial. This meant that the educational system had to be changed or renewed, along the same or similar modern lines, hence the competency movement.

As stated by Elam (1971: 3–4)

technological developments have made available new resources for teaching and learning and threaten to alter the teaching role in fundamental ways. Business and industry have entered the education field, not only operating education programmes for their own purposes but preparing and marketing new learning tools and techniques. New technologies included microteaching, videotaping and computerised instruction.

1.1.4.3 Success of Competency-Based programmes

Among the factors that helped the competency movement to develop and spread widely was the success of the new educational programmes, which were based on the concept of competency, both in the preparation and training of teachers, and in providing them with the necessary qualifications to fulfil their teaching tasks during the training period as well as during their career. It may be helpful to look again, briefly, at some previous studies which indicated the success of such programmes.

The results of a study conducted by Stieglitz (1972) have shown the effectiveness of developing source modules in the areas of treating reading difficulties, and individualising instruction used in a competency-based teacher education programme.

Four years later (1976) Rice also conducted a study with the aim of developing competency-based instructional modules for in-service education in

reading. The results indicated that these modules did help to develop the professional capacity of teachers.

Hyne conducted a study (1977) to compare the effectiveness of a traditional-style graduate course in linguistics and the teaching of reading with the effectiveness of a course taught in a manner designed to fit a definition of competency-based teacher education. One of the results showed that this type of a competency-based course is a more effective method of increasing cognitive knowledge related to language and linguistics than a traditionally-designed course.

In addition, many studies have been conducted in Arab countries, which have also shown the success of competency-based programmes. The most prominent among these studies are the ones conducted by Abu al-Samīd (1985), Ṣalāḥ (1988), Mafīz al-Dīn (1991) and al-Ḥasan (1992).

It may also be worth pointing out here that the previous factors seem to be the main ones which led to the growth of the teaching competency movement. According to Hall and Jones (1976: 2), there are four main factors relevant to the growth of the competency movement in the U.S.A: a teacher surplus; a shift in expectations regarding college education by society and students; public demand for accountability in professional training; and the coincidental timing of research and development efforts related to instruction and learning.

In the general conclusion to this chapter I will discuss the following questions which seem to be most relevant to the growth factors of this movement: how can we apply this movement in Oman, which constitutes quite a different environment; and

what evidence can be found to indicate that the ideas of the movement can be successfully employed there?.

I would like to point out here that some of these factors stated above, if not all of them, can also be applied in the field of teaching Arabic, which can benefit from them. The criticism of traditional programmes can motivate us to build new competency-based programmes, which will remedy shortcomings in the performance of teachers of Arabic, particularly those who graduated from traditional educational institutes, which concentrated in the past on teaching theoretical aspects of knowledge, without giving sufficient time and attention to practical competencies. In designing new programmes, we must first define the types of teaching competency which are necessary for teachers of Arabic at all educational grades or levels, by conducting field studies. We shall also have to use observation cards in evaluating the performance of these teachers, in the light of the principles of competency. The present study is designed to fill these gaps.

Modern technological teaching aids for assisting the teacher in fulfilling his teaching task - such as overhead projectors, audio and video recorders, projectors, copiers, and language laboratories (Wringe, 1995: 134) - can also be applied in the teaching of Arabic.

1.1.5 Assumptions Underlying the Teaching Competencies Movement

As some educationalists have pointed out, the teaching competencies movement has been based on a number of assumptions. The most important of these are:

(1) If a teacher is to fulfil his teaching tasks successfully, he should acquire the educational competencies necessary for the accomplishment of those tasks; this

means that a teacher's possession of sufficient theoretical knowledge of his subject matter and other educational material does not guarantee success in teaching that subject, or in meeting the requirement of the educational professional in general. Such a person will also have to acquire sufficient practical knowledge in the field of teaching. This view is supported by Dodl and Schalock (1973), who suggest that professional licence to teach should be based on demonstrated competencies defined in terms of knowledge, teacher behaviour and specified pupil outcomes (p.: 46). It is well known that a teacher's mastery of teaching competencies exercises a direct and strong influence on the level of the pupil's attainment; in fact, it is no less important than school curriculum, home environment, community, life motivation and the social-economic condition in which teaching takes place (see for example Houston, 1985: 900; Sa'āda, 1986: 90).

(2) Teaching competencies may be obtained theoretically, then applied practically. They can also be evaluated and measured through observation during the teacher's performance in the classroom ('Abd al-Hāfīz, 1986: 47). Since the criterion by which a teacher's competency has to be evaluated is made "on the basis of what the teacher *can* do rather than simply on what he knows or says he will do when faced with a certain teaching situation" (Quirk, 1974: 252), his actual performance in the classroom can be measured as evidence of his competency.

(3) The teaching process itself can be analysed into a number of competencies, which any teacher needs to possess to a high degree, in order to succeed in his profession. He will have to acquire first the skills, knowledge and

practical experiences which comprise these competencies (al-Shaykh & Zāhir, 1981: 150).

‘Abd al-Rāziq and al-Shibīnī (1986) present the essential assumptions upon which the teaching competency movement is based. They state that teaching is a profession with certain rules and regulations. A teacher has to possess some specific teaching competencies, if he is to function professionally and successfully, and these teaching competencies can be professionally identified. They can be acquired through a combination of knowledge and practice and can be evaluated or measured practically. They exercise a direct and profound effect on pupils’ learning outcomes (p. 85).

It seems evident that these assumptions warrant us to emphasise the importance of the teaching competencies movement. It is a movement which enables teachers to fulfil a task which is greater than mere demonstration of knowledge.

1.1.6 Criticisms Directed Against the Teaching Competencies Movement

Though the teaching competencies movement has received the support of many professional educationalists, as we have seen above, it has also been subjected to a good deal of criticism and doubt by others. Here, we need to survey the main types of criticism from opponents and the counter arguments to these criticisms.

Firstly, the movement has been accused of neglecting or ignoring human nature. Nash and Agne (1971: 150) say that many prospective teachers are sceptical of the competency model because they believe it to be unresponsive to their personal-social ideals. They also claim that a professional curriculum tends to

emphasise only professional skills and pay no attention to feelings, values and attitudes. But Nash and Agne (1971) deny these claims and present several arguments in support of the movement. They write that “ it is time that we made a concerted effort to insure that the competencies we seek to develop in our students include the affective domain” (p. 151)

They demonstrate their view by referring to the effort which the College of Education at the University of Vermont has made recently to provide a setting in which personal concerns and performance criteria can be joined. Through what it calls the personal component, the college has offered its students an independent, structured and credited opportunity to explore, express and comprehend their feelings and values. This, they say, shows the college’s commitment to the proposition that human learning begins with human feeling and valuing⁴ (ibid.: 151–152).

Smith (1972: 173) states “we must keep the human elements in the forefront. Teachers, like other people, cannot all be squeezed into the same mold; they have different personalities, with different interests, teaching styles, and specialisation”. Massanari (1973: 246) notes that the teaching competency movement does in fact pay heed to human nature. He states that because competency-based teacher education (CBTE) is concerned with the achievement level of students, and incorporates self-paced learning, educationalists in the movement are used to attending to individual learning needs, learning rates, and learning styles.

4 The college did this by “giving the students an opportunity to pursue self-discovery and self-actualization through activities that are freely chosen and autonomously experienced. Each semester, beginning with the freshman year, students select personal experiences from a number of possibilities, including encounter groups, community action experiences, dialogue rap sessions, individual and/or group counselling, student-initiated colloquia presentations, and a whole series of extremely personal endeavors such as learning to play the guitar or constructing a collage” (Nash and Agne, 1971: 152).

Furthermore, Dickson (1979: 18) emphasises that the CBTE programme attempts to create instructional curricula that meet known personal differences among learners, through individualised instruction. But Sullivan and Higgins (1983: 4) claim that

In and of itself, CBI [Competency-Based Instruction] has nothing to do with humanness or passion. Neither do other teaching methods. CBI is simply a way to teach effectively. It is the teacher, not the teaching method, who is or is not humane to students. As advocates of CBI, we believe that you should always treat your students with respect, enthusiasm, kindness, and understanding.

A second point of criticism is that the movement is concerned with the formulation of teaching objectives in a behavioural manner, fragmenting the teaching situation into small elements or units and depriving it of the integration of these elements or units. Likewise, predefinition of the objectives and competencies restricts the freedom of the teacher with regard to innovation and creativity in his performance. This means, as Campbell (1974) says, that the competency movement does not trust the teacher to know how to teach and to deal effectively with pupils, and it has to plan everything for him (*ibid.*: 226–227). In addition, Torshen (1977: 19) makes the point that there is an implied argument that effective competency-based educational programmes will produce teachers who are more or less identical. Teachers who are products of this programme will all have the same skills and knowledge and will operate by using the same procedures and methods. Torshen sees this as a bad thing.

Moreover, Burns (1972) thinks that an extensive number of problems are associated with the construction and use of behavioural objectives in competency-based teacher education programmes. One of these problems is the scope of

objectives. He argues that a major problem arises when objectives are either too specific or too broad. If the objectives are too specific, thousands of individual objectives may be involved in a typical teacher-education programme. If each of these thousands of individual objectives must be tested for a minimal standard of performance, the programme staff will soon run out of time, energy and enthusiasm. On the other hand, if the objectives are too broad, they tend to be vague and performances will be difficult to measure (ibid.: 25–26).

Cohen and Manion (1977) try to refute previous views which undervalue the importance of behavioural objectives when they write that a behavioural objective will be required when the desired outcome is a skill that can be demonstrated or when the results of instruction can be expressed overtly. Therefore, acquisition of factual knowledge will have to be formulated in behavioural terms. Individualised learning is another area where behavioural objectives would seem appropriate; and if one is to organise material for some programmed learning, then behavioural objectives will need to be stated (ibid.: 56).

What has been shown by Cohen and Manion is in agreement with Torshen's (1977) view. He states that competency-based education is not based on the premise that all students (prospective teachers) should attain the same goals, but that each student should attain the educational goals appropriate to him. Students should not learn the same things and employ the same methods. But each of them should learn the basic skills and knowledge, attitudes and values he needs in order to be competent (ibid.: 19).

Furthermore, objectives are logical refinements of competency statements, providing greater specificity and explicitness. These objectives are defined in measurable, observable and verifiable terms, thereby ensuring that mastery can be defined with confidence (Hollis et al, 1978: 6). In addition, objectives, as Burns (1972) shows, serve many functions in the educational process. They can act as a means of communication among professional educators, and between teacher and learner; as a basis for selecting appropriate instructional activities; as a basis for evaluating learning outcomes and finally, as a means for making decisions about the proper sequence of instructional events (ibid.: 18).

Meanwhile, the division of the teaching situation into small elements or components which are seen to lack integration and unity is actually intended to facilitate the learning process, as it is evident that the mastery of the teaching situation depends on the mastery of all relevant competencies which comprise it and not the mastery of only some of them.

Other criticisms against the competency movement are made by Hermanowicz (1978). He presents arguments criticising the CBTE movement and argues that some people claim that “what seemed to be a major effort for improving teacher education is now limping along” (p. 11). This criticism is based on the observation that the movement attracted many simple-minded advocates and promoters who designed new programmes. As a result, many programmes were created simply by extracting objectives and content from existing conventional courses, with little or no attention given to conceptualising teacher functions. Some programmes also placed insufficient emphasis on theoretical and conceptual

knowledge, which is so important as a background for practitioners in analysing and interpreting problems and issues. Moreover, “programmes often used rather primitive assessment strategies and specified competencies were simplistic in term of the realities of actual, complex teaching situations” (ibid.: 11–12).

However, Hermanowicz himself (1978) disagrees with this point of view. He states that despite all the criticism, the movement has had a lasting and positive impact on teacher education. In support of the movement, he argues that its principal contribution is its emphasis upon defining goals for the preparing teacher, with greater clarity and attention to functional realities than have been exercised in the past. Moreover, he points out, the movement has forced a re-examination of the fundamental content of teacher education in terms of its relevance to the responsibilities expected of teachers; it has also forced an examination of goals, content, instructional modes and evaluation in the total system for preparing teachers. Finally, it has forced the establishment of stronger, more meaningful relationships between university personnel who prepare teachers and field practitioners (ibid.: 12).

It is clear from what has been said above, that like other educational movements, the competency-based teacher education movement has some shortcomings. But, in spite of all protests, the movement, as shown by Hyne (1977: 2), has developed rapidly, and made many valuable contributions to teacher education. According to Stoffle and Pryor (1980: 56), the movement has to be seen as a new approach, whose aim is to improve educational achievement and will make school systems and teachers more accountable to the public. As Mar'ī (1983: 47–48) sees it, the movement has been the subject of widespread and profound

controversy among educationalists. Supporters and opponents of the movement have produced many new studies dealing with teacher education. The movement has also focused attention on the practical aspects of teacher education without neglecting the theoretical ones. It may be claimed here that the movement has related educational theory to teaching practice and treated them as integral parts, or two sides of the same coin, each indispensable to the success of the teacher in his profession.

Al-Ḥasan (1992: 103–104) thinks that the movement has established, or helped to establish, some new educational trends, which have been found useful in the construction of teacher education programmes, for example, in the behavioural formulation of the objectives of these programmes, the defining of the teaching activities related to them and the attention paid to self-learning. In addition, the movement has produced a long list of teaching competencies, which can be used in the process of selecting the competencies most suitable for teachers, in the light of, on the one hand, the latest scientific and technological developments and, on the other, the development of the teachers' roles and their teaching tasks.

The movement, as al-Farrā' (1984: 59) points out, has considered the teacher competencies performance as the starting point in evaluating teachers, and in judging their success within the teaching process. It has also emphasised the importance of the teacher's self-evaluation, and has provided teachers with the means to evaluate their own performance and the levels of success they achieve, sometimes on their own and sometimes with the help of supervisors and training centres.

According to Elam (1971), there are many distinguishing characteristics of competencies movement programmes. These include, firstly, the derivation of

competencies from explicit conceptions of teacher roles (p. 6) and secondly, the determination of rate of progress through programmes by demonstrated competencies rather than by time or course completion. A third characteristic is that the learning experience of the individual is guided by feedback, which enables the trainer and trainee to prepare additional objectives to the programme or modify the original objectives to be more realistic, taking into account the needs of each individual student (p. 7). Fourthly, programmes focus on objectives, formulated in advance, to be used as bases for performance evaluation (p. 14); and finally, competencies movement permits effective integration of theory and practice (p. 15).

It is clear that the competencies-based teacher education movement has made many contributions, which can no longer be ignored. To teacher education; it renders the educational process more effective and more responsive to the demands of the modern or even post-modern age. It has helped to define the different teaching competencies and the educational tasks of teachers and the relationships between theory and practice in the field of education and teaching. All these qualities and characteristics mean that the movement can no longer be ignored in the preparation, training, development and evaluation of teachers.

Therefore, carefully planned programmes must be drawn up based on the concept of teaching competencies. This will require, in turn, a clear identification of teaching competencies, both general and specific, which every teacher has to possess throughout the different stages of his teaching career. This is especially relevant for teachers at the start of their careers; the transition from training to practice is particularly difficult because of the lack of familiarity with these competencies and

the lack of professional support provided. Therefore, we will try in the present study to define the linguistic competencies deemed essential to teachers of Arabic and, in so doing, prepare the way to the planning of relevant competency-based programmes. However, before defining these competencies, we should classify them and identify their sources.

1.2 Teaching Competencies: Their Bases, Classification and Sources

1.2.1 Introduction

As we know, the identification of teaching competencies is a crucial first step toward designing competency-based teacher education programmes. Therefore, the second section of this chapter will attempt to present the bases for identification of these competencies and classify them and identify their sources. To achieve this purpose, the section will be divided into four parts. This first part addresses the bases on which the identification of teaching competencies is built; the second will deal with the different types of teaching competencies; the third is to be devoted to the domains of these competencies; and the fourth to their sources.

Before going into the details of this section, I wish to stress that the chapter on methodology (Chapter Three) will make full use of all parts of this section, particularly in the construction of the list of the competencies which are necessary to the teacher of Arabic and in the designing of observation card, which is hoped to be used in the evaluation of Arabic teachers in Oman.

1.2.2. The Bases Essential for an Identification of Teaching Competencies

Many studies have already dealt with the bases used in drawing up lists of teaching competencies. In his study of the competencies which teachers of Islamic education need to acquire, Wazzān (1983: 86–87) gives details of the bases which he considered in the preparation of his list as follows. Firstly, the competencies were formulated as behavioural objectives in order to make them easy for the teacher to understand and practice them correctly. Secondly, these competencies should be in accordance with the trends and principles upon which the competency-based movement was established. Thirdly, they should be in harmony with the nature of the subject matter taught, the levels of pupils and the educational stages of teaching.

In his turn, Mur‘ī (1983: 188–189) explained that, in defining teaching competencies, his bases were, firstly, to transform these competencies into behavioural objectives, which reflect the functions and tasks that a teacher can perform; secondly, to include in the list all the knowledge, skills and attitudes required; thirdly, to base teaching competencies on the values and traditions of the society in which teaching takes place; and lastly, to express teaching competencies in very clear language, which can be easily understood by teachers.

‘Abd al-Rāziq and al-Shibīnī (1986: 93, 96) think that, in identifying competencies, all lists should be comprehensive enough to cover all the cognitive, affective and psychomotor⁵ domains. Furthermore, each competency should be behaviourally stated, so that it can be observed and measured. Both the school

⁵ The psychomotor domain includes those competencies that emphasise motor skills, such as handwriting, typing, speaking and laboratory skills.

conditions and the sources available to the teacher should be taken into consideration when identifying competencies and given the utmost attention, so as to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty among observers.

There seems, then, to be a general consensus among researchers regarding the factors which have to be taken into account in identifying and formulating the competencies list. These factors include, firstly, the transformation of teaching competencies into behavioural objectives, which can be observed and measured. This is in agreement with what Kemmis and Stake (1974) indicate. To them, competencies need to be operationally defined and, therefore, transformed into behavioural objectives (p. 322–325). A second factor is that the list should cover all the knowledge, skills and attitudes required and another is that the competencies should be precisely and unambiguously expressed. Fourthly, they should be considered in relation to the role of teacher and the values of society at large. Lastly, they should be formulated in the light of the principle of the competency-based movement, that is, with clear and diverse objectives, and with sufficient attention to the variety of teaching methods and the new teaching technology.

1.2.3 The Types of Teaching Competencies

Many researchers have already identified the types of teaching competencies and their components.

In an article entitled, “Specifying Teacher Competencies”, Cooper et al (1973: 19) pointed out that there are three types of teaching competencies. Knowledge competencies specify the cognitive understanding that a teacher is expected to demonstrate; performance competencies specify the types of behaviours

and attitudes that a teacher is expected to demonstrate in classroom; and consequence (outputs) competencies specify pupil behaviours, and are taken as evidence of teaching effectiveness (see also Borich, 1977: 6–7).

As shown by Houston (1985: 898), four kinds of competencies are required for successful completion of the programmes in teacher education. Cognitive-based competencies are defined as knowledge and intellectual skills and abilities; performance-based competencies are related to doing something, rather than knowing something; consequence-based competencies refer to what one can accomplish; and affective competencies define attitudes and values.

However, Freeman (1989), as presented by al-Woheiby (1996: 16), thinks that there are four kinds of competencies to be incorporated in EFL/ESL teacher education. They are: (1) knowledge that deals with theory and concepts, embedded in the teacher's subject matter, specialisation and the educational areas; (2) skills, which enable the teacher to deal competently with any teaching situation; (3) attitudes, which show the teacher's stance toward his profession; and (4) awareness, which enables the teacher to focus his attention on how much knowledge the pupils possess, how skilled they are, and how productive their attitudes are.

Delamere (1986: 329–330) had already attempted to organise teaching competencies of effective EFL/ESL teachers into three categories. The first category, knowledge, comprises competencies such as learning theory and the psychology of education. The second category is skills, which every teacher has to possess, such as assessment and diagnostic skills, teaching techniques, and use of, and development of materials. A third category covers interpersonal skills and

attitudes, such as empathy with pupils, and an ability to take account of their individual learning styles.

Recently, Whitty (1996) wrote: “we took the view that the term ‘professional competencies’ should be taken to refer to knowledge, understanding and attitudes as well as to practical skills” (p. 88).

We notice, then, that those who have written about teaching competencies, and attempted to identify the various kinds of competency, agree that teaching competency contains four components: firstly, knowledge and theories, which the teacher relies upon in his performance; secondly, the fulfilment of a number of acts; thirdly, certain attitudes and values; and fourthly, a certain level of performance, and certain outcomes of this performance. In the light of this, we can say that teaching competencies fall into four kinds: cognitive competencies; performance competencies; affective competencies; and consequences or products competencies. It may be useful here to look briefly at these four types of competencies.

1.2.3.1 Cognitive Competencies

These are understood as the theoretical knowledge, concepts and facts which every teacher should acquire in his specialist area such as the philosophy of education and its aims and theories, teaching techniques and methodologies, and information concerning the learner such as his educational and personal growth, problems and needs; plus a wide general knowledge.

The possession of these competencies will make teachers, as Cooper et al (1973) argue, more effective in their profession, enable them to make better decisions regarding their teaching functions, and understand better why and how to

teach. These competencies include, for example, both the ability to define the term “higher-order questions”, and the ability to describe the major aspects of effective classroom management (p. 20).

1.2.3.2 Performance Competencies

These competencies refer to how a teacher can perform within a certain teaching situation. A teacher who possesses these competencies will be able to fulfil the various aspects of teaching. However, the demonstration of these competencies will rely on the cognitive competencies, which the teacher already enjoys. That because “it is widely recognised that performance [itself] in the classroom does not represent the complete professionalism expected of a teacher” (Lindsey, 1973: 181). Performance competencies are then analysed to determine what knowledge the teacher would need in order to demonstrate them. These competencies include, as Cooper et al (1973: 20) indicates, for example, both the ability to use classroom management behaviours, and the ability to use value clarification techniques.

1.2.3.3 Consequence Competencies

These concern the terminal competencies of the teaching process, and the desired change which a teacher can produce in the performance of his situation. A teacher’s competency can be measured, then, by the size of this change (al-Laqqānī & al-Jamal, 1999: 190). Nevertheless, a teacher’s success here depends on his possession of the two previous kinds of competency.

1.2.3.4 Affective Competencies

These competencies are associated with the teacher's tendencies, attitudes, and values. They form the dynamic basic power behind the teacher's behaviour and effectiveness, and his acceptance of the teaching profession (Şalāh, 1988: 54).

The foregoing survey shows clearly that teaching competencies are interconnected, and indispensable to teachers, both pre-service and in-service.

1.2.4 Domains of Teaching Competencies

1.2.4.1 Introduction

It is well known that every teacher has his independent area of specialisation and subject matter, which is different from the subject matters of other teachers. This specialisation naturally requires specific competencies appropriate to the subject matter. On the other hand, some characteristics are common to all specialisation. They, in turn, require general competencies, which every teacher should possess. This means that there are two kinds of teaching domains; the first demands general competencies, and the second special competencies.

As we indicated earlier, the main purpose of the present study is to identify the linguistic competencies required for teachers of Arabic. Therefore, the central concern in this part is to discuss these specific competencies. It will be helpful, however, not to ignore the general competencies. Although a huge amount of educational research has been conducted with regard to the general competencies, very little has been designed to identify linguistic competencies, particularly in Oman, where educational research is still in its infancy.

By directing attention to the general and specific competencies, we will be able to show the components of each one of these competencies, and the strong relationships which exist between them. There is no such thing, however, as a complete separation between general and specific competencies. They are interrelated and teachers need to possess the two in order to be competent in their profession. The separation is made merely to facilitate the task of researchers, and to direct attention to the special characteristics of each kind of these competencies.

1.2.4.2 General Teaching Competencies

The area of general teaching competencies, as we said before, has been widely investigated. Here, we will review the relevant literature and present some of these competencies extracted from previous research.

In 1971, Miller and Miller published a study in which they tried to determine the degree of importance of some selected personal qualities and professional competencies that administrators in the Louisiana public school system saw as having contributed most to the success of classroom teachers. The study emphasised the importance of certain professional competencies, from the highest to the lowest level: knowledge of subject matter in teaching field; classroom management and discipline; the ability to organise materials for teaching; the ability to organise learning situations; evaluation; creativity in teaching; economical use of class time; class achievement; and general knowledge and information (p. 37–39).

To define the competencies needed in the training of in-service teachers, Ingersoll conducted a study in 1976. He designed a questionnaire, which included 43 sub-competencies categorised into seven groups, as follows: interpersonal

communication and administration; developing pupil self; individualising instruction; assessment; discipline; developing personal self; and classroom management. The results showed, through teacher responses, that all of these competencies were important in in-service training (p. 171–173).

Nash (1976) reviewed the literature concerned with good teachers, and found several categories of teacher behaviour, which expressed pupils' views and expectations of teachers in junior, modern and grammar schools. The pupils expressed the view that the good teacher is one who is both firm and capable of keeping order; who has a good knowledge of the subject and explains difficult points; he is encouraging and treats pupils fairly; and finally, he is good-tempered and has a sense of humour (p. 64–65).

In 1978, another study was carried out by Butzow and Qureshi, with the purpose of identifying the competencies required for science teachers in the State of Maine. The results showed the importance of 12 types of competencies: (1) up-to-date knowledge of the subject taught; (2) having a good rapport with the pupils; (3) recognising the individual academic abilities of pupils, and trying to encourage each of them; (4) making the lessons inspiring without wasting time; (5) controlling discipline problems to protect the learning experiences of pupils; (6) planning class lessons in advance, and presenting scientific concepts and ideas in a clear organised manner; (7) fostering independent and critical thinking in the pupils; (8) relating the scientific ideas to the daily life experiences and the general needs of the pupils; (9) evaluating the academic progress of pupils; (10) responding effectively to the sudden

diversion of pupils' thoughts; (11) instructing pupils about laboratory safety and practices; and (12) fulfilling professional responsibilities (p 59–66).

In 1980, a third study was carried out by Methakunavudhi to identify the general competencies required for elementary pre-service teachers. The findings showed that these competencies fell into four major categories related to: individual differences; instructional procedures; classroom management; and human interaction between teachers and pupils (p. 1547).

A year later, Dean (1981) published a study concerned with what tomorrow's teachers will need. He found that they will need the competencies of: questioning; leading discussion; planning; organising the learning environment; knowing how children develop and learn; having a body of knowledge as teaching material; helping children to ask questions, sort material, and draw conclusions (p. 127).

In 1988, Scriven drew up a list of the professional competencies which enable teachers to perform effectively in their teaching. In his view, the main domains of competencies are as follows: knowledge of duties; knowledge of school and community; knowledge of subject matter; instructional design; gathering information about pupil learning; communication and management competencies; personal characteristics; and service to the profession⁶ (p. 132–134).

Whitty (1996) related the competencies of any professional to two domains. The first is that of knowledge and understanding, which covers five types of

6. Regarding the order of domains in this list, Scriven (1988) stated that "the order used here is not a presumed order of importance. That is, the earlier items are usually required before the later ones can be fully handled by the evaluator" (p. 134).

competencies: knowledge of children and their learning; subject knowledge; knowledge of the curriculum; knowledge of the teacher's role; and knowledge of the educational system. The second domain is that of skills, and it also involves five components: subject application; classroom methodology; classroom management; assessment and recording; and finally, undertaking a wider role within the teaching profession (p. 89–90).

The Department of Education and Industry in the Scottish Office (1998) classifies the competencies that student teachers in courses of initial teacher education must acquire, and divided them into four categories as follows: competencies relating to subject and content of teaching; competencies relating to classroom, covering communication and approaches to teaching and learning, class organisation and management, and assessment; competencies relating to the school, and the education system; and finally, the values, attributes and abilities integral to professionalism (the Scottish Office: 10–14).

In addition to the research presented above, other researchers have investigated general teaching competencies. Among them are Gargiulo and Pigge (1979), and Dewalt and Ball (1987).

In Arab countries, these competencies have also been given much attention by researchers. A careful review of these studies indicates that the majority of researchers who have written on this topic tend to agree with what has been said by the studies reviewed above.

Although there is not much space here to deal in detail with the Arabic studies that have focused on general teaching competencies, it may be helpful to

mention, briefly, the names of some of the Arab researchers in the field. The best known of them are: Hamdan (1980), al-Shaykh and Zāhir (1981), Mar‘ī (1983), Sa‘d (1983), ‘Abd al-Rāziq and al-Shibīnī (1986), Ṣalāḥ (1988), Yūsuf (1988), Mafīz al-Dīn (1991), al-Halwachi (1992), al-Ghāfirī (1995), and al-Rabiey (1995).

It is apparent from this list that Arabic studies were written in the last twenty years, though some writers began their work at the start of the 1970s. We can also stress here that the number of studies which have so far appeared in the field is very large, and that they have covered most of the general teaching competencies required, and complemented one another. Furthermore, it appears from these studies that there is agreement among the researchers concerning the importance of these competencies for the preparation and training of teachers, and for the improvement of their performance in the teaching situation.

The findings of these studies also show an agreement on specific kinds of competencies. From our perspective, they can be divided into three main areas. The first is planning, fulfilment and evaluating the lesson including: (a) knowledge of subject matter; (b) achievement of objectives; (c) learning activities; (d) audio-visual aids; (e) time ordering; and (f) asking and answering questions. The second is interaction and classroom management involving: (a) classroom discipline; (b) treating pupils fairly; (c) establishing relationships with others; (d) cooperating with school and community; and (e) solving problems. The third is application of learning principles including: (a) consideration of all aspects of pupils' growth; (b) motivating pupils to learn; (c) self-learning; and (d) appreciation of differences among pupils.

However, there are five competencies which have been emphasised by some researchers, but not by others; they are knowledge of educational philosophy; undertaking accountability; reinforcement strategies; pupils' thinking; and forming attitudes.

We need to mention here that most of these studies focus on the primary stage of education, and only a small number of them dealt with other educational stages. The intermediate stage received very little attention. This fact indicates that there is still a great need for practical studies dealing with this later stage.

In their turn, the researchers have also used various instruments in defining teaching competencies, such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation cards. The present study will make use of some of these instruments, particularly the questionnaire and observation card, in identifying the competencies required for teachers of Arabic.

1.2.4.3 Specific Teaching Competencies (Linguistic Competencies)

As is known, teachers cannot be expected to do an acceptable job if they do not master the subject matter that they teach. This applies equally to teachers of Arabic. It is generally agreed that they must have the competencies and ability required for teaching their subject effectively. This means that they have to possess the linguistic competencies needed for teaching this subject, in addition to the general competencies mentioned earlier. As expected, the subject of Arabic has its own specific objectives which must be achieved. But every aspect of the Arabic language curriculum demands a group of competencies suited to it. That is to say, the teaching of Arabic requires a variety of competencies which correspond to various aspects of

the Arabic language curriculum. Therefore, for each of these aspects, specific competencies have been listed by some researchers.

To design and develop a programme model for competency-based education for teachers of English, Loheyde carried out a study in 1977. It identified the specific competencies regarded as crucial to the teacher of English at the secondary stage in New York State. These competencies were divided into five categories as follows. Firstly, the competencies for teaching literature which use a variety of genres, and the use of literature in the teaching of composition, vocabulary, and so on. Secondly, the competencies for language teaching which demonstrate the ability to teach English language skills, as well as a thorough knowledge of traditional English grammar, structure, and usage. Thirdly, the competencies for teaching writing, which demonstrate the ability to analyse, in detail, the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' writing, and to relate writing instruction to the pupils' interests and experiences. Fourthly, the competencies for the teaching of listening and speaking, which relate speaking and listening activities to the pupils' own experiences and interests, and give all pupils a chance for in-class speaking, either through oral reports, panel discussions, choral reading, role playing, and debates. Finally, the competencies for the teaching of remedial reading, which develop a basic understanding of the process of reading, including decoding and comprehension allow pupils to practice oral reading and interpretation, teach them reading skills, and increase their vocabulary and reading rate (p. 106–111).

Another study carried out by Bilotta ((1983), attempts to identify competencies needed for teaching reading to pupils of limited English proficiency.

These competencies are divided into two domains. Firstly, the cognitive domain includes: teaching comprehension competencies; assessing pupils' language development; knowing the techniques used in teaching sight vocabulary; reading aloud to pupils; and teaching reading for a variety of purposes. Secondly, the affective domain includes: developing an awareness of the feeling of pupils in classroom situations; showing appreciation for pupil's verbalisation of experiences; awareness of the importance of motivation in the process of reading instruction; and awareness of the fact that not all pupils learn to read in the same manner (p. 81–83).

One of the major studies in linguistic competencies in an Arab country was conducted in Egypt by 'Abd al-Hāfiẓ in 1986. It is designed to identify the competencies necessary for teachers of Arabic at secondary school. These competencies are classified in relation to various aspects of the curriculum. Firstly, literary texts, an area which includes reading the text correctly; knowing the writer, and the general purpose of the text; explaining difficult vocabulary; explaining the stanzas and units of a poem, and commenting on them; identifying rhetorical figures of speech in the text; knowing the characteristics of the style of the writer; and conducting a comparison between one text and another, either by the same writer, or by another. A second area of the curriculum, reading, involves reading the text both silently and aloud, and discussing its general ideas; explaining difficult items of vocabulary and their function in building new phrases; deriving and analysing some partial ideas; and summarising some paragraphs. A third area under consideration in this study is grammar including: choosing a text or a short passage as an example, and discussing its ideas; deriving examples from the text discussed and comparing them to elicit the rules; and choosing different forms of exercises to cover different

aspects of grammar rule. Fourthly, the curriculum area of composition involves choosing a suitable subject of composition for the pupils; discussing the subject and identifying its main ideas; giving the pupils a chance to express their ideas freely; writing the subject by linking its main ideas; and correcting the composition by paying attention to its language, style and ideas (see Appendices of. 'Abd al-Hāfiz' s study, p. 3–9)

Another writer, Madkūr, conducted a study in 1988, to evaluate the educational preparation programme for students of Arabic at the College of Education in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In his evaluation, Madkūr covered aspects of the linguistic, cultural and professional preparation. The competencies, related to the linguistic aspect were identified as those of, firstly, understanding, analysing and criticising oral speech; secondly, using the right, or most suitable, words and sentences in oral composition to express ideas clearly and fluently; thirdly, understanding, analysing, criticising and evaluating the given text, fourthly, writing correctly, in reasonable style, using proper punctuation, organisation ideas, and avoiding spelling errors; fifthly, using dictionaries; sixthly, knowing the main writers, genres and trends in Arabic literature throughout its long history; and, lastly, knowing the well-known Arabic bibliographies (ibid.: 23–26).

Another researcher who investigated linguistic competencies in an Arab country was al-Ḥasan, in 1992. He designed a programme for teachers of Arabic in pre-service, identified competencies required for teachers of Arabic, and divided them into six domains as follows. Firstly, competencies for teaching listening by learning to grasp the general contexts of phrases and sentences to understand

unfamiliar words and the meaning of the text as a whole in a critical manner. Secondly, competencies for teaching speaking, including, for example, talking in modern standard Arabic and convincing others by giving evidence and following the proper strategies of argument and discussion. Thirdly, competencies for teaching reading, such as reading correctly, whether silent or aloud, distinguishing between major and minor ideas, and using dictionaries. Fourthly, competencies for teaching writing, such as writing quickly, accurately, and without mistakes, organising ideas during writing, and presenting views and topics smoothly and logically. Fifthly, competencies for teaching literature, for example, analysing and criticising literary texts, improving the approaches to reading poetry, and comparing one literary text with another. Finally, competencies for teaching grammar, for example, introducing suitable questions to explain and simplify any grammatical rule; understanding the relation between the grammar and the effective expression; applying the grammar in both speaking and writing (p. 207–210).

Ghazāla and ‘Uthmān conducted a study in Saudi Arabia in 1993 in which they identified the competencies for teaching Arabic as follows. Firstly, the competencies of using modern standard Arabic (MSA) in both talking and writing by encouraging pupils to avoid the use of dialects and to emulate higher literary styles; by using correct punctuation and linguistic links; and by pronouncing words properly and fully. Secondly, the competencies of expression, including the ability to state one’s opinion on any subject discussed; the organisation of ideas and linking them together; and correct use of new words and phrases. Thirdly, the competencies of using language in its proper social context, by learning how to interact with others, and at the same time, observing the social rules of listening. Fourthly, the

competencies of developing reading ability through the use of different texts, dealing with different subjects, identifying and summarising the major ideas in them, and of encouraging the pupils in free reading, that is, reading for pleasure. Fifthly, the competencies for enabling pupils to acquire a positive attitude towards Arabic, and to develop their capacity for linguistic appreciation, their appreciation of beauty in Arabic literary expression, and their understanding of literary styles (p. 14–15).

In his study of the competencies for EFL teachers in Oman, al-Rabiey (1995) also tried to identify the linguistic competencies, in addition to the general ones. These competencies included speaking clearly, without hesitation or confusion, speaking a foreign language exactly like a native speaker, never using local dialect, except when necessary, speaking at an appropriate speed, and with a properly modulated voice, and avoiding grammatical and pronunciation mistakes (p.136).

The Omani Ministry of Higher Education has identified the linguistic competencies necessary for teachers of the first stage of basic education as follows. They should possess all the competencies relevant to the various aspects of the Arabic language, i.e., listening and comprehension, oral expression, reading and writing; and they should have a knowledge of the general functions of the language, and of their integration with the functions of other subjects, as well as a knowledge of the basic rules of Arabic grammar. They should possess a good general knowledge of the genres and trends in Arabic literature from the pre-Islamic period to modern times, with concentration on understanding, analysing, criticising, appreciating and evaluating literary texts, as well as knowledge of the basic elements

of Arabic rhetoric, general knowledge of phonetics and semantics, and the proper use of dictionaries (Wizārat al-Ta'lim al-'Ālī, 1999: 8).

Very recently, in Oman al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001) carried out study to identify the educational and the linguistic competencies required for Arabic teachers in the First Cycle of Basic Education. He lists, in general, some linguistic competencies related to teaching different Arabic aspects and they are: listening, speaking, reading, writing and rhythms (*anāshīd*).

The above mentioned studies are, as far as I know, the most important ones in the field of the linguistic competencies required for teachers of language. In addition to these, other studies have sought to identify the linguistic competencies needed by pupils at the different stages of education. In fact, these studies help any educationalist concerned with educational programmes to write suitable books, which correspond to the needs of both teachers and pupils of a particular stage. They can also assist the teachers to identify the standard of the pupils, and by so doing compile dictionaries suited to the linguistic needs of the pupils. Furthermore, these studies can also be used in the present study, as sources for deriving or defining the linguistic competencies. Among the most prominent writers who deal with the linguistic competencies required for or relevant to pupils are Mujāwir (1974), Ruḥāb (1984), 'Abd al-Walī (1985), Sayyid (1988), Aḥmad (1991), and al-Kalbānī (1997).

Thus, we can see that many studies concerned with identifying the linguistic competencies required for teachers of language have already been published. They form a formidable body of evidence for the importance of these competencies, and make it clear that the success of language teachers depends largely on their

possession of the competencies necessary in their profession. But this depends, in turn, on a proper identification of these competencies by educational researchers, and on how far they are understood by teachers in the field.

The linguistic competencies which the above-mentioned studies deal with, cover reading, writing, listening, dictation, grammar, literary texts, and oral and written composition. It is important to mention here that the most detailed studies which deal with linguistic competencies are 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ's (1986) and al-Ḥasan's (1992). Their detail gives them special significance, and renders them more useful than the others for our present study, particularly with regard to the construction of the list of linguistic competencies related to the teaching of Arabic. The studies of Madkūr (1988), Ghazāla and 'Uthmān (1993), al-Rabiey (1995) and al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001) have dealt with these competencies in a very general way. Bilotta's study (1983) has paid special attention to the division of the required competencies into two domains, the cognitive and the affective.

Nonetheless, the studies dealing with the linguistic competencies remain few in comparison to the ones which concern themselves with teaching general competencies. In Oman, particularly, the linguistic competencies associated with the teaching of Arabic have not received sufficient attention. There is no single study which deals with the subject in the intermediate stage, apart from the document published by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1999 and al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001) to which we have already referred. When we look closely at the competencies mentioned in them, we can see that they are general linguistic competencies, and some of them are undefined in a behavioural manner, which can help teachers to

understand and apply them in their teaching. In addition, they do not cover all the competencies required by the various aspects of the language.

Hence, there remains a need for a full study which identifies in detail all the linguistic competencies needed by teachers of Arabic in Oman, and measures how far they have possessed and mastered these competencies. The pilot study mentioned in the Introduction of the current study emphasised this demand. It is hoped then that the findings of the present study will be a starting point towards further empirical research in this topic.

1.2.5 Sources of Teaching Competencies

The selecting of competencies is the most crucial issue in competency-based education. Therefore, to identify the competencies required for teachers, one must use the various sources from which these competencies can be derived.

In Andrews' opinion (1974: 32), the best source of lists of the basic competencies that all teachers need to possess and demonstrate in their work is the Catalogue of Teacher Competencies, which was an outcome of long and intensive research into the relevant literature, and of a year's review and revision by educationalists throughout the United States.

Lindsey (1973: 183) presents the sources employed in the process of identifying competencies. He states

Fundamentally, the identification of teaching competencies requires a conception of the nature and goals of education in a particular setting and the roles of teachers in that setting. ... Another approach to identifying competencies involves departing from many descriptions of teacher behaviour; subjecting those descriptions to analysis, synthesis,

and evaluation; and finally, abstracting sets of behaviours that make up teaching competencies.

Dodl (1973: 195–196) lists four approaches to the derivation of competencies. They are: role analysis, which implies a functional description of job position needed in specific schools; analysis of theoretical models of instruction; needs assessment, which suggests deriving competencies from the real world and relating them to the classroom; and course translations, which encourages instructors to convert present course content into behaviourally stated outcomes by reformulation of the requirements of the course into competency statements.

Likewise, Houston (1985: 904–905) states that there are many approaches that can be used for specifying competencies such as, firstly, programme translation, where goals of programmes or courses are reformulated into competencies as behavioural objectives; secondly, task analysis, which means determining competencies from professionals' roles by observing their performance, or through face to face discussions; thirdly, the needs of school learners by focusing on the ambitions, values, and perspectives of pupils; and, finally, needs assessment, by assessing the real and vital needs of society, and translating knowledge of these needs into school programmes.

According to Hall and Jones (1976: 42), there are also many sources from which one can derive competencies, such as existing lists; course translations; taxonomic analysis, which includes cognitive, affective, performance, consequence, and expressive competencies; input from the profession; theoretical constructs; input from clients, which includes both pupils and community; and task analysis.

So far, the review of the relevant literature has been directed towards the sources from which teaching competencies can be derived. As can be seen from this review, these sources are both numerous and varied, and the methods employed by the researchers are themselves many and various. Each researcher has chosen the types of sources and methods best suited to his aims and the nature of his research. Kay (1975: 30), for example, states clearly that “while there are numerous routes to competency identification, no one of them alone would be best under all circumstances”.

The sources which we have already mentioned can be divided into five types as follows.

1.2.5.1 Educational and Specialist Sources

These sources include, firstly, the results of previous studies containing lists of general and specific teaching competencies, in different countries and various educational stages. This type of source also encompasses studies of the subjects taught with the analysis of their contents, and their transformation into primary basic competencies and secondary non-basic ones, and then into behavioural objectives, which can be observed and measured. Cooper et al (1973: 19) refer to this source when they state that another base from which teaching competencies can be derived is the subject matter area, which teachers are expected to deal with. A third aspect of this type of source is the study of curricula and teaching methods.

1.2.5.2 The Analysis of the Teaching Process

This source is based on the assumption that the teaching process covers a number of teaching tasks and roles which any teacher has to fulfil, such as explanation,

questioning, the use of teaching aids, class management, and evaluation of pupils. By analysing these tasks and roles, we can reveal the competencies which lie behind them.

Cooper et al (1973: 19) emphasise the importance of the above source by stating that some teaching competencies should be derived from the analysis of what effective practitioners do in their teaching. They also add that competencies such as making assignments, asking questions, giving directions, and leading discussion may not be generated from other sources. Similarly, Kay (1975: 12) points out that the task of any analytic approach is to look very carefully and critically at teaching, in order to discover the competencies teachers need to perform successfully in the classroom or to bring about desired outcomes.

1.2.5.3 Benefiting from the Opinions of Educationalists

This means benefiting from those who are working in the educational system; drawing on the experience of teachers, inspectors, and experts in curriculum development and teaching methodology, with regard to the identification of teaching competencies. Teachers, being practitioners, will be able to inform any researcher of the competencies which they need in their profession, and of the different competency which each teaching task requires. The inspectors, in their turn, will have sufficient knowledge of the performance of teachers, their successes and failures, through their actual observation of these teachers in different teaching situations and in the reports they have to write about them. As regards the experts in educational programmes and teaching methods, they usually have a good knowledge and understanding of teaching and its problems, of the tasks and roles of teachers,

and of the developments which occur in the field of teaching and their impact on the roles of teachers.

There is yet another source related to this point: the empirical base. Many educationalists have argued strongly that teaching competencies must be generated from an empirical base. This means that teaching competencies must be linked to knowledge obtained from experience or experiment (Cooper et al., 1973: 18).

1.2.5.4 Adaptation of a Certain Educational Theory

This means identifying teaching competencies in the light of the principles and concepts underlying a certain educational theory upon which the educational system in the country is based. In fact, each educational theory has its own special applications in the educational system. Thus, the identification of the teaching competencies required at a certain educational stage, and for a certain subject can differ from one theory to another. Kay (1975: 9) also confirms the importance of this source, and states that “there have been several attempts to derive competencies from theoretical stances”.

1.2.5.5 Needs Assessment

By this is meant the identification of the needs and aspirations of both learners and society through their transformation into teaching competencies possessed by teachers.

This survey of sources is the basis for a proposed questionnaire, which will be aimed at identifying linguistic competencies in the teaching of Arabic. It will pose questions on the various competencies dealt with in the linguistics part of this

chapter, the aim being to transform these competencies into behavioural objectives which are observable and measurable.

1.3 Conclusion

So far, we have looked at the teaching competencies movement and its importance in the educational system. The chapter was divided into three main sections. The first was concerned with the teaching competencies movement, as an important educational trend in teacher education. The second was about bases, classification, and sources of teaching competencies. As a result of our review of the relevant literature the following conclusion, as the third section in this chapter, may be offered.

It is certain from the review of the literature and research related to the topic of the current study that the competency-based teacher education movement represents a major trend in the field of teacher preparation, training and evaluation, despite the criticisms made of it.

It can also be said, as a result of the review, that the teaching competencies trend has distinguished itself from other trends⁷ in teacher education by basing itself on a number of educational principles such as the principles of accountability, self-learning and individualised instruction, and by the success of its [CBTE] programmes in improving the performance of teachers at all educational stages. Furthermore, according to McNamara (1992: 283) this movement carries the

⁷ Here, we refer to other trends such as the cognitive trend, the affective trend, the system analysis trend, the practice teaching trend and the cultural trend.

connotation that those in authority can determine how teachers should teach and prescribe what they consider to be practice.

With regard to the importance of this trend in teacher education, the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman has sought, as previously mentioned in this chapter, to improve the education of Omani teachers by applying the new trend and its principles, hence the importance of the present study, whose aim is to identify the linguistic competencies of the teachers of Arabic, and, by so doing, assist the Ministry in designing its programmes for the education of teachers, both pre-service and in-service. The present study is based on the point made by Hermanowicz (1978: 13), when he states that “attention must be focused upon building a clearer picture of the relationships between pre-service and in-service teacher education. It is wasteful to treat them as separate entities”.

It is noteworthy that many studies of teaching competencies were conducted in the field of general teaching competencies. To the best of my knowledge, there is no study in the field of linguistic competencies, and no attempt has been made to indicate which of these competencies is more appropriate at intermediate stage in Oman. There is therefore a real need to investigate and identify the competencies required of teachers of Arabic. Furthermore, there is an increased need to design a new observation card for use in the evaluation of teachers of Arabic. It is hoped that the present study will make a contribution to the field, and provide educationalists in Oman with new findings that can advance their knowledge about these competencies.

The observation was made in this chapter that some of the studies reviewed were concerned with specifying teacher competencies, while others were carried out with the intention of evaluating the performance of teachers, and a third group of studies were conducted in order to design programmes. On the one hand, given the fact that the specification of teachers' competencies is a first step towards designing any educational programme, as well as constituting a crucial aspect of it, and, on the other hand, given the lack of investigation of linguistic competencies in Oman, it seems reasonable that the present study should focus on identifying and specifying teachers' competencies in the hope that its results will serve as a starting point for further empirical research in Oman.

A review of the relevant literature will be useful for the present study. It should provide, among other things, sufficient evidence of the importance of the competencies under consideration and some valuable ideas for the techniques and procedures to be used in this study.

I now return to the questions that I raised previously in this chapter (1.4.3): how can we apply the competency-based teacher education movement in Oman which constitutes a different environment from that of western civilisation, where this movement has already become widespread; and what evidence can be found to indicate that the ideas of the movement can be successfully employed there?. The following statements of intention support my contention:

Arab countries, like other countries of the world, realize the importance of the teacher to society and, as a result, have conducted many conferences and research projects in order to find logical solutions to the problems which presently prevent the achievement of teachers' goals. This age is witness to great advances of science and technology in all

aspects of life, including the foundations of teaching. Arab countries are greatly influenced by this present movement of innovation and change (Gulf Conference Intermediate Committee, 1984: 13).

Because the teacher's role has been changing in accordance with the developments taking place in many societies, and because the teacher is the pivot of the Arab society, it has become necessary for teacher to be thoroughly prepared both academically and professionally for the teaching profession (Damah, 1984: 18). As a result, the effectiveness of the CBTE movement, as previously discussed in this chapter, led many researchers in Arab countries (such as, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain) to apply the principles of this movement for building many educational programmes. The findings of these studies have shown the success of such programmes.

Though there have been vast improvements in teacher education in Oman in recent years, as shall be seen in Chapter Two, there remains much more to be done. In looking at our current system of teacher education in Oman we notice that the procedures and methods adopted for the preparation of teachers are still in need of improvement. Therefore, the fact that Oman enjoys an educational environmental which displays more similarities than differences with other Arab countries which have already adopted the principles of the teaching competencies movement, it would appear that the most acceptable model to which teacher education in Oman might be adapted is a competency-based programme.

Returning to the reasons behind the growth of the teaching competency movement in this chapter, section 1.1.4 we pointed out that one of these factors is "a teacher surplus". Therefore, we should ask whether this particular factor is

sufficiently pressing in Oman to lead us to accommodate this movement in our educational system?.

In fact, so far, Oman does not have a teacher surplus. Although at primary school level, nearly all the teaching staff are Omanis, there are many teachers at intermediate and secondary schools from other Arab countries. However, those teachers are symptomatic of a surplus in their own countries, and because Oman resembles other Arab countries in its educational environment, those teachers also constitute a surplus in Oman. This means that many of these teachers lack experience and fail to provide high quality teaching; they are unable to meet the challenge of dealing effectively with the problems encountered in the classroom on a daily basis. For this reason, the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman is making strenuous and concerted efforts to replace them at all stages with trained Omani teachers in the light of the principles of the competency-based teacher education movement.

In conclusion, then, while the current situation in Oman with regard to the supply and demand of teachers does not correspond exactly to the condition of teacher surplus, as described in some of the studies discussed in this chapter, the pressing need to recruit and train high quality native teaching staff does make a strong case for the application of the teaching competencies movement to teacher training programmes in Oman.

Teaching Arabic Language at Intermediate School Stage in Oman and the Linguistic Competencies Required for it

This chapter presents an outline of the teaching of Arabic language in Oman and its linguistic competencies. It is divided into four main sections. The first describes the characteristics of the Arabic language to extract its linguistic competencies. It begins with an introduction, which outlines the importance of language in life and in the educational system as a pedagogical subject. This section also discusses the characteristics of language in general and Arabic in particular. The role of the teacher in contemporary times is investigated in the second section, with special attention to the influence of recent educational developments.

The third section deals with the current status of Arabic language teaching in Oman. A review of teacher-training in Oman from the historical perspective is followed by a discussion of a programme for Arabic language teaching. This part examines the constituent elements of the programme; its philosophy and objectives, with regard to the theoretical background of each aspect of Arabic.

The conclusion comprises a general summary of the issues discussed throughout this chapter and some critical views. This chapter, as a whole, is an important basis of the two next chapters: the methodology and the findings.

2.1 Characteristics of the Arabic Language and its Linguistic Competencies

2.1.1 Introduction

It is well known that the teaching of any subject is distinguished from others by its own peculiar nature and the goals that it seeks to achieve. Therefore, many studies have sought to find the method most suited to the teaching of each subject. They have benefited in this from the recent developments in education. As a result, there have appeared new educational trends aiming at improvements in teaching. The most prominent of these trends, as we have seen in Chapter One, is that of competency, which focuses mainly on studying the teacher's behaviour in the classroom and analysing his teaching roles to find the required teaching competencies.

Accordingly, language is one of the most important subjects in education. Its importance is derived from its role in life, which is described below. Al-Huṣrī, for example, as shown by Chejne (1969: 22), brings out the important role of language in the life of a nation. He states "Language is one of the most important ties which bind people together. First, because it is the instrument of communication and, above all, the means of thought. ... Lastly, it is the means of transmitting thoughts and experience from fathers to sons, from forefathers to grandsons, and from ancestors to their offspring". Similarly, "language is the medium by which thoughts are conveyed from one person to another" (Palmer, 1968: 8).

As a result, language, as indicated by Stubbs (1976: 12–13), is

A central fact in schools and there are therefore several simple but important reasons why it deserves careful study by anyone concerned with education. Some of these

reasons are as follows. Schools and classrooms are pervasive *language environments*. Pupils are dealing with language for most of the day: with the spoken language of the teacher or of the other pupils, and with the written language of books. There is a sense in which, in our culture, teaching is talking. Research ... shows that, on average, teachers tend to talk for about 70 per cent of classroom time. ... It is sometimes said that “every teacher is an English teacher” and that “every lesson is an language lesson”. By this is meant that a teacher of any subject ... has to teach the language of his subject.

In the light of what has been said above, Arabic in the Sultanate of Oman is the principal instrument used in the teaching of all subjects with the exception of English, which is taught as a foreign language. Therefore, it is essential for successful teaching that sufficient attention is given to Arabic. Such attention requires that the teacher should have a good knowledge of the characteristics of the language so that he can choose the right method in teaching it. This is because teaching, according to Ismā‘īl (1991: 122), is an interaction between a sender and a receiver or between a teacher and a pupil. A teacher has to formulate and express his thoughts in linguistic forms appropriate to the standard of the pupils to facilitate the interaction. In addition, the knowledge of these characteristics is necessary to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching. This is what the present study seeks to achieve by compiling a questionnaire to include these competencies.

Like any other language, Arabic is an instrument for preserving the heritage of the nation, and for communication and understanding among its members. It is also the prime instrument in acquiring knowledge and passing it from one generation to the next (Samak, 1979: 54). Language plays a major role in the performance of pupils, and it is well established that there exists a strong relationship between a pupil's performance and his linguistic ability (‘Abd al-Şamad, 1997). Thus, a good

knowledge of language usually enables pupils to excel in other subjects that require a high degree of competency in reading, writing and expression, and therefore in organised thinking (see, for example, Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī, 1984: 26; Madkūr, 1991: 63). In contrast, the lack of language competency leads the teacher to commit many linguistic errors. In time, these errors spread among the pupils and from them to others (al-Sayyid, 1988: 3).

If Arabic is to accomplish its educational function, then the teaching of it will need to be planned at every stage of education, taking into consideration the targets of society as a whole and those of the educational stage in particular. Furthermore, the teaching of Arabic will require the formulation of teaching programmes that correspond to these plans, and the establishment of well-defined teaching methods that are in harmony with the principles of modern education.

This is where the teacher of Arabic makes an important contribution towards the fulfilment of the function of Arabic in education, particularly on the practical side of his work. He can teach the language in such a way as to improve the pupils' linguistic ability to the point where they can practise it properly in their daily lives ('Abduh, n.d.: 9). This can be done by creating positive situations to which pupils respond actively. For instance, a teacher can choose in teaching composition local situations and social themes well-known to the pupils, or international events relevant to their lives. In fact, pupils can express themselves more successfully regarding familiar and relevant topics than those beyond their realm of interest.

In literature a teacher can choose texts which express such emotions and feelings as the love for one's homeland and the duty of defending it. He can also

choose texts that suggest images and aspects of appreciation. Furthermore, he can encourage pupils to visit the library to borrow useful books to read, and to participate in the school activities and institutions around them such as the school radio, school newspapers or journalism and theatres (Ibrāhīm, 1984: 425–426).

To shed more light on the competencies mentioned above, we need to discuss the general characteristics of language and some particular characteristics of Arabic. As a language, Arabic shares with other languages a number of characteristics. However, it also contains some that appear in it in greater proportion than in other languages.

2.1.2 General Characteristics of Language

Although this part of this chapter is concerned with characteristics of the Arabic language, we need first to present the characteristics of language in general. In this context, language, as Jadwat (1987: 4–5) states, “is certainly the most important form of communication, although not the only form. It is a gift from God to the human race and yet it is taken for granted because it is so central to our natures as human beings. ... Language may be generally described as ... knowledge, skill, behaviour, habit, object, tool”.

Language is also a system, that is, its sounds are arranged in a certain way to convey meanings or senses agreed upon in society. Its words are arranged in a certain way so as to formulate phrases and sentences. Any breach of these arrangements can lead either to misunderstanding or the lack of understanding. The scholars of each language therefore take great care in establishing general rules that help to control its usage and contribute to its continuity (Yūnus et al., n.d.: 10).

When a teacher succeeds in communicating the significance of this characteristic of language to the pupils, he enables them to understand linguistic construction, and to choose the vocabularies and linguistic structures or models which convey the meanings that they seek to express.

Language incorporates a system of sounds, which means that for thousands of years human beings have taken these sounds as a medium for conveying thoughts, feelings and all other mental activity (Raslān, 1988: 11). Therefore, the basis of language is speech, while the written form is the next stage in its history. Writing, as Semaan (1967: 22) states, is a relatively recent invention. It is a medium that was invented, in the first place, to communicate with others far away in place or time. This means that the speech remains, as al-Sayyid (1988: 12) says, the most suitable and common medium of communication. Cintas et al. (1977: 20) underline this point by stating that “spoken language is very old and belongs to everybody. Written language is comparatively new and is the daily practice of only a small part of the human family”. The spoken character nature of language, as a result, requires that language should be taught first in its oral, not written, forms, where listening and talking should precede reading and writing.

Another characteristic of language is that it is both social and human. As Fishman (1977: 97) states, “language is society. There can be society without mathematics, without science, without history; but there simply cannot be society without language”. This means that human society is mainly responsible for the development of language. People are born prepared for talking and communication, and with the necessary biological organs and capacity. However, if they live in

isolation, they will not be able utter a word and will not possess language. This is to say that the natural preparation for speech has no impact or trace except in a human society. In this context, Woolfson (1997: 212) points out “the theory that language is inborn is more plausible. It proposes that each child is born with the ability to speak and to use language, that he already knows how to recognise language from all other sounds in the environment”.

The social and human characteristic of language therefore demands that it should educationally fulfil the aspirations of human beings and respond to their basic needs and to those of society in general. As a result, because language is important in society, so it is in education (Stubbs, 1976: 15). Thus, “trying to teach a language (i.e. the competency to use it) without any form of social interaction is a contradiction in itself” (Frank & Rinvulcri, 1987: 7).

Language is also a type of behaviour acquired by individuals as a result of contact with other members of their society. Cintas et al. (1977: 23) emphasise this fact: “Language acquisition takes place in a speech community. As with other innate abilities, the acquisition of language must be invoked, stimulated, and enriched by an environment which presents a model of what it is that is to be acquired”.

The acquisition of language does not cease at a certain stage. It begins in infancy and continues throughout a person’s life. The family plays a major role in children’s acquisition of language. That is because their linguistic progress usually depends on the use of language by their family, which contributes in this respect as much as well-organised teaching. Woolfson (1997: 213) states that “a child raised in a family in which there is open discussion and plenty of chat as part of everyday

communication is more likely to have a rich array of language skills than a child raised in a family that has a paucity of spoken communication”.

With regard to these characteristics, the teacher has to take into consideration the differences between pupils in their linguistic progress as shown in their ability to express themselves orally and in writing.

2.1.3 Specific Characteristics of the Arabic Language

Arabic is a living, a modern, and also an international language with a modern literature and culture (Jadwat, 1987: 2). As a result, in its international application and geographical area, it is considered today one of the most important languages (Inayatullah, 1976: 1). It is in addition widely spoken on two continents, across the entire breadth of North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East (Awde & Samano, 1986: 13).

The two most prominent characteristics of Arabic, which are presented below as examples, are derivation (*ishtiqaq*), and inflection (*i'rāb*).

2.1.3.1 Derivation (*Ishtiqaq*)

Ishtiqaq in Arabic is to form a word from another while maintaining a close or basic relationship between the two, both phonetically and in meaning (Ma'rūf, 1987: 43).

This is illustrated by the following example (Awde & Samano, 1986: 15–16):

The three consonants, k, t, and b – combined in that order: k-t-b – connote the idea of writing. The simplest word based on those letters is *kataba*, which means “to write”. That is the root. If you go to an Arabic dictionary and look up the root *kataba*, you will find, among many other entries, the following ... [*kitaab* “book”, *maktab* “office”,

maktaba “library”, *kaatib* “clerk”]. ... The connection of all these words with the underlying idea of writing is pretty clear¹.

Derivation, therefore, has prompted some writers to emphasise the importance of this phenomenon in the development of Arabic. Among them is Irving (1957: 289), who states: “These many roots plus the innumerable changes that can be made within them, make Arabic one of the great languages of the world, and for this alone, it is worth learning”. Chejne (1969: 48–51) also points out that derivation is the most productive method for coining new vocabulary and expressions in Arabic beside other important methods such as analogy (*qiyās*), compounding (*naḥt*), Arabization (*ta’rīb*), metaphor (*majāz*) and inflection or vowel endings (*i’rāb*). For more details about this theme, see, for example, al-Mubārak (1964: 291–301); Stetkevych (1970: 1–65); Bakalla (1981: 12–13).

A similar view was expressed by Jadwat (1987: 45). He describes the derivation as follows:

The most important characteristic of the Arabic language is its creative morphological system based on the tri-consonantal root system. Most of the words in Arabic are derived or built up from a fixed root pattern made up of three original radicals or consonants. ... In this way, even new words in Arabic can be coined by derivation or by imposing certain vowel patterns on the radicals of the root. The meaning of each of these derived forms bears a specific semantic relationship to the root pattern.

The above discussion leads us to point out that Arabic is capable of meeting the challenges of the present and the future by serving the changing needs of Arab

¹ See also Versteegh (1997: 81–82)

society in all fields of human knowledge. Inayatullah (1976: 69) underlines this point: “The language which could convey the meaning of Plato and Aristotle in the past, should not, I think, fail to express the thought of Berg son and Einstein in the present age”.

Derivation is then an important instrument in the growth of Arabic, the richness of its vocabulary and its power of expressing new ideas and new events in human life. Consequently, the teacher of Arabic can benefit from this phenomenon when teaching the language, and explain to pupils the idea that “an increase in linguistic construction leads to an increase in meaning” (Yūnus et al., n.d.: 15), and he can help them exploit this idea in their speech and writing.

2.1.3.2 Inflection (*I'rāb*)

A characteristic of Arabic, *i'rāb* is defined by Bohas et al. (1990: 54), as “the variation of the final vowel in words after their insertion in the utterance, and determined by the different governing operators (*'awāmil*) which affect them”. *I'rāb* is not a verbal ornament nor meaningless signs, but signs which contribute to the clarification and understanding of speech by defining the place of each word in it. Thus there is a strong relationship between inflection and meaning. Hence the saying: “*al-i'rāb* is part of meaning” (Madkūr, 1991: 49).

To illustrate the importance of *i'rāb* in Arabic, an example stated by Stetkevych (1970: 86), is given below:

I'rāb determines the distinction between subject and object in such a sentence as: *aqraḍa Muḥammadun 'Alīyan* (M. lent money to A.). Even if we change the order of the words

(*aqraḍa 'Alīyan Muḥammadun*), this distinction remains. Without the *i'rāb*, however, it would be impossible to establish with complete certainty the true subject and object.

I'rāb, then, can be used educationally by selecting grammatical topics recommended for pupils, and considering its function in them. The teachers of Arabic as well as those of other school subjects should observe grammatical rules in their speech and writing. This will help their pupils to acquire the correct linguistic constructions and models.

To sum up section 2.1, the linguistic competencies required by teachers of Arabic, as could be specified and summarised from the above, are as follows. Firstly, enabling pupils to express themselves correctly in modern standard Arabic in their speech and conversation both inside and outside the classroom, and to encourage them to do so under their teacher's supervision whenever possible, such as discussing problems or questions that interest them. Secondly, encouraging pupils to read freely outside school, and allowing them to choose useful subjects to read about, analyse and criticise, and summarise their reading in their own words and style. Thirdly, training pupils to pronounce letters and words correctly, and dealing with any defect in their pronunciation such as "al-fa'fa'a and al-ta'ta'a ", stammering and stuttering. Teachers should also encourage pupils to participate in the school's activities designed to improve their linguistic knowledge, such as writing poetry, short plays, journalistic articles, and short radio programmes.

2.2 The Role of Arabic Teachers and Linguistic Competencies required

The central concern here is with the role of the teachers, which is essential to identify their competencies. This topic has been given much attention in the literature

concerned with teaching. We have already mentioned briefly in Chapter One of this study (1.2.5.2) that the analysis of teachers' roles is one of the sources from which teaching competencies can be identified. Therefore, the literature on teachers' roles will be examined next, and from the material will be extracted the main linguistic competencies required for Arabic teachers at the end of this section.

During the last few decades of the twentieth century there were several profound changes that influenced education in general and the role of teachers in particular. According to Jarādāt et al. (n.d.: 108–109), the most prominent changes are the population explosion, the expansion of knowledge, and progress in science and technology, which have resulted in the appearance of new educational theories. These changes demand that education should be activated and oriented in such a way as to lead change and growth in all aspects of life. The authors believe that the greatest responsibility in this respect falls on the shoulders of the teachers. The teachers' role, therefore, is no longer confined to passing information to pupils, but includes various new activities. Pellow (1985: 4) describes the role of the teachers as follows:

The greatest single influence on the quality of education that pupils receive in schools is the quality of their teachers. Poor buildings, lack of resources and shortages of textbooks can hinder the learning processes while in contrast good provision can enhance them. However, whatever the circumstances may be, without good teachers little or no progress can be made.

Therefore, the teachers' indispensability in education needs to be stressed more than before. They remain the sole power that is capable of understanding pupils, dealing properly with them, and helping them to adapt to the changes in life

around them. This, however, does not lessen the importance of modernising teaching methods and educational systems, constructing new buildings, and employing modern equipment and technological instruments.

As a result, there are a number of factors that shape the role of teachers and what others expect of them. Some examples are given by Hoyle (1969: 54–57): the local education authority, the type of school in which they teach and the sort of district in which it is situated, and attributes such as age, sex and qualifications. Furthermore, Morrison & McIntyre (1973: 98) point out that

many aspects of a teacher's role are shaped by the society or the community in which he works. Those relationships with other members of the community, which are particularly significant for him vary according to cultural, geographical and administrative features of the context in which he is teaching. For example, a private tutor, a teacher who is the only teacher in a small rural community, and a teacher in a large city school have different role-sets from one another, and their relationships with members of their role-sets are likely to be very different.

In the light of these factors, we shall look at some examples of teachers' roles as suggested by many writers. Redl & Wattenberg (1951), as shown by Hoyle (1969: 59–60), mention the more important roles of the teacher. A teacher is a representative of society by inculcating moral precepts; a helper by providing guidance to pupils in difficulties; a supporter by helping pupils to have confidence in themselves; a group leader by establishing the climate of the group; and an object of affection by meeting the psychological need of pupils. In addition, teaching, as Richards (1990: 12) states, is usually regarded as something that teachers do to bring about changes in pupils. As a result, Richards (1990) presents the following as the

kind of roles that teachers see themselves playing in the classroom: a monitor of pupils' learning, a motivator, an organiser, a controller of pupils' behaviour, a counsellor and friend and, finally, an evaluator.

To conclude, it appears from a survey of the literature that the role of teachers is affected by a number of factors which have required them to adapt to changing circumstances. We therefore notice that there are many new roles which a teacher has to play in the classroom. These roles can be summarised as follows. Firstly, enabling pupils to understand the values that they hold. Secondly, creating a supportive learning environment that provides learning resources in response to the needs and desires of the pupils. Thirdly, selecting the appropriate teaching strategy from a range of options and guiding pupils in using the appropriate means to solve problems. Fourthly, responding appropriately to human behaviour, encouraging independence, co-operation, self-discovery, and constructive thinking among the pupils. Lastly, adopting the code of ethics of the teaching profession, and interacting with members of the school community regarding educational issues and problems affecting the school.

From the above discussion, it is clear that teachers of Arabic have general roles similar to those of the teachers of other school subjects, which we have already covered. On the other hand, they also have roles peculiar to the teaching of Arabic. They are roles which vary, none the less, according to the various aspects of language. With regard to reading, for instance, the teacher's role is to encourage pupils to read as much as possible to increase their knowledge and acquire new experiences and competencies until reading becomes a natural activity in their daily

lives. When dealing with literary texts, as another example, the teacher's role is to help pupils develop their literary taste and artistic sense and appreciation. Again, in teaching grammar, the teacher's duty is to guide pupils in their speech and writing by encouraging them to observe grammatical rules and correct their errors.

These specific roles of Arabic teachers represent linguistic competencies. To fulfil these roles, the teachers also need certain general linguistic competencies derived from the general roles of teachers already mentioned. They can be summarised as follows: (1) a wide knowledge of language to enable teachers to show pupils how to employ language functionally and overcome various difficulties; (2) a sufficient knowledge of the new teaching methods and styles, and the ability to use them in training pupils in how to remove their weaknesses in language; (3) a keen in benefiting from the results of new research concerning the teaching of language; and (4) an awareness of the goals of teaching Arabic and their importance in directing pupils towards innovation and creativity.

As a result of the numerous roles that teachers are now expected to fulfil and the varied circumstances in which they have to work, it has become necessary to reassess the methods of training teachers. To begin with, we need to know the kinds of competencies that a teacher of Arabic should possess. With this knowledge we can devise programmes appropriate for training teachers who are capable of meeting the demands and challenges of the present age. At this point, we must turn to the next theme in this chapter.

2.3 The Current Status of Arabic Language Teaching in Oman

This section comprises two parts, the first of which discusses pre and in-service teacher-training, and the second describes the programme of Arabic language teaching in Oman.

2.3.1 Teacher-Training in Oman

Preparation for the future is the primary function of formal education. It can mean a general education to prepare the child for adulthood, or a professional training to prepare a person for a specific job (Torshen, 1977: 20). The teacher, therefore, is the most important element in education despite rapid advances in educational technology (Dean, 1981: 124), and he will remain the primary factor in the development and implementation of a sound educational system. The future of nations thus lies in building firm educational foundations. This, in turn, depends on the attention given to training the teachers who form the framework of these vital foundations (Rasheed, 1984: 3).

Oman realises the importance of teachers to society, for it emphasises the significance of their role and considers them the key element in the country's development. As a result, it has given more attention to training qualified teachers by establishing two types of teacher-training. One is pre-service training and the other is in-service training to increase the competencies of existing teachers. These types are described briefly below from a historical view point and are followed by a conclusion. The purpose is to examine the status of Arabic language teachers in these training programmes and to know to what extent they need to refresh their knowledge and update their linguistic competencies.

2.3.1.1 Pre-Service Teacher-Training

The first step was taken by the Ministry of Education in 1976–77 to train Omani teachers for the primary schools with what is known as the First Programme. Pupils who passed grade 7 were accepted for two years on this programme. Although a total of twenty-five pupils were enrolled in the first class, the programme was regarded as an unsuccessful experiment and was discontinued.

In the academic year 1977–78, a secondary-level Teacher-Training Institute was established to accept intermediate school graduates (grade 9). The duration of this programme was three years, at the end of which the graduates received the Secondary School Certificate for Teachers.

To upgrade and improve the Teacher-training Institute, the intermediate colleges were established in 1983. The first group of students who had achieved secondary school certificate was accepted in 1984–85. They were trained as primary school teachers for two years to teach both the three lower levels (grades 1, 2 and 3) as classroom teachers for all subjects as well as the higher grades (4, 5, and 6) as specific subject teachers. (For a detailed description of the educational system in Oman, see, for example: Muḥammad, 1985: 14–15, 17; ‘Abd al-Rāziq & al-Shibinī, 1986: 60–69; Muḥammad, 1987: 60–74).

In 1995–96 the intermediate colleges, further upgraded to colleges of education, offered university degree courses in education (Wizārat al-Ta‘līm al-‘Ālī, 1998: 6; and Ministry of Information, 1999: 206). Recently, the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University began providing the educational system with local Omani teachers trained to university level (al-Salmi, 1994: 112–113). This

college is training students as intermediate and secondary school teachers. The first group of students enrolled at this college in September 1986 and they graduated at the end of the academic year 1989–90 (‘Īsān, 1995: 125).

Teacher-training was further upgraded after the Higher Teacher-Training Institution was established in 1991–92 for training pre-service, intermediate and secondary school teachers. It accepted Omani graduates from Sultan Qaboos University and from universities in other Arab countries who wished to take up teaching but lacked the necessary professional training. However, the Institution was closed at the end of the academic year 1994–95 since its functions have been taken over by the many new colleges of education (‘Īsān, 1995: 138; Ministry of Information, 1996: 150; Allen & Rigsbee, 2001: 166–170).

2.3.1.2 In-Service Teacher-Training

In-service teacher-training, according to Bishāra (1986: 94), is a strategy to upgrade a teacher’s competencies after he has completed initial training and is employed as a teacher. For this reason perhaps, Brimm and Tollett (1974: 521) state that “in-service education has long been recognised as a vital part of the educational process for the classroom teacher”. Al-Rabiey (1995: 25, 39) also points out that specialists in teacher-training believe that in-service as well as pre-service training of teachers increases their abilities and improves teaching practices in the classroom (see also Dean, 1981: 123). The necessity for in-service training has emerged, as al-Ani (1984: 101) states, from the recent changes such as the rapid innovations in instructional technology, the global increase in knowledge and the rapidly growing population. These changes have made a great impact on education. As a result, to enable teachers to cope with, accept and utilise these changes, education must

prepare them with in-service training programmes. Al-Ani (1984: 101–102) again points out that

in the Gulf States, there are several major factors which point to the importance of in-service teacher training, including the fact that the effects of in-service training are continual and never-ending. Also there are many low-qualified teachers in the Gulf States because of the necessity to educate a growing population. These teachers are in dire need of scientific and vocational training.

Al-Qarnī (1995: 128, 130) also emphasises that the urgent need for producing national teachers at the early stage of modern education in the Gulf States led to a temporary abandonment of many essential conditions regarding the qualities of teachers and of the entry requirements for teacher-training programmes. This resulted in producing large numbers of teachers who are still suffering from the lack of the necessary teaching competencies, and therefore it is important to train those teachers while they are teaching.

In the light of this experience, Oman realises the importance and necessity of in-service teacher-training. The philosophy is that teacher-training should not end with the graduation of the student from one of the teacher-training institutes, but that it should be a life-long professional development (al-Qurayshī, 1997).

As a result, in-service training for Omani teacher began in 1972 and was dedicated to the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor strengths in teaching practice. Its main goals were to increase the efficiency of Omani teachers; update their knowledge and skills; and enable teachers to utilise the new ideas in

educational technology for improving the quality of state education ('Abd al-Rāziq & al-Shibinī, 1986: 75).

Historically, there have been three basic in-service programmes in Oman which can be described briefly as follows. The first type was Basic Qualifying Training. It offered a basic teaching qualification for Omani teachers who had entered the profession without any kind of professional training. However, this programme was discontinued in 1986–87. The second was Continuous Training. This type was aimed at updating the teachers' knowledge and techniques and developing their professional attitudes. The third type consisted of specialised training sessions for leadership positions such as administrators for schools and school districts and s (see Muḥammad, 1987: 7–9; 'Īsān, 1995: 157–169).

From the above literature on the development of teacher-training in Oman since 1970, we can draw the following conclusions. As regards the pre-service teacher-training in Oman (see section 2.3.1.1), it can be said that the educational authorities in Oman took a great interest in its development, for the training programmes evolved in several stages. However, the single-subject specialisation for Omani teachers was initiated only from 1986. Before that time most of the teachers who taught in the higher stages of Omani schools were from other Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and the Sudan. This meant that the standards and qualities of these teachers, including their knowledge of the Arabic language, varied according to the educational systems in their own countries. This naturally led to a variation in their standard of teaching. Even today there are still some teachers who

lack experience and competency in teaching or who suffer from certain weaknesses in their specialisation.

The pilot study that I conducted in Oman during the second term of the school year 1998–99 revealed widespread dissatisfaction among the consultants in the teaching of Arabic with the subject's standards and results. (The pilot study is described in the Introduction of this thesis). It was obvious that the teachers of Arabic in Oman were still in need of further training before and during their professional career. These findings were supported by the results of several earlier studies of this topic, which were made by researchers in some Arab countries. Among them were 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ (1986); Hawārī (1988); Bādī (1990); al-Ḥasan (1992); Ghazāla and 'Uthmān (1993); al-Khalīfa (1997). All of these studies state that the training programmes for Arabic teachers need improvement.

The studies also indicate that the main reason behind the low standard of Arabic teaching is an inherent weakness in the teacher-training programmes. This is due to many reasons. In the first place what is offered in the training programmes bears little relevance to what teachers need in practical terms in the classroom. This suggests that the training programmes still concentrate on the theoretical rather than the practical aspect. During the pre-service programme, the student teachers of Arabic study nothing about Arabic calligraphy and the rules of dictation, and do very little practice in grammar, rhetoric, and literary criticism. The lack of practice, in fact, was a major weakness highlighted in the criticism directed at the traditional programmes of teacher-training, which led to the emergence of the trend of

competency-based teacher education (CBTE), as described in Chapter One of this thesis, section 1.1.4.

Another reason behind the low standard of the teaching of Arabic is the dependency on personal experience in the development of the teacher-training programmes. This is due to a lack of specialised studies, which could be used as a guide in compiling the content of these programmes. A third reason is that a large number of the teachers of Arabic enrolled at the colleges of education against their wishes. This was because there was nowhere else for them to go since they achieved low marks in their secondary school examinations.

These reasons can be applied to most of the colleges of teacher education in Oman, which is why many teachers are still not well qualified for their profession or teaching tasks. This view is also supported by a number of studies that have recently been conducted in Oman with the aim of improving the teacher-training programmes. They show that the defect lies in these programmes. Among these studies was one by al-Salmi (1994: 10), in which he evaluated the teaching methods used in teacher-training. He stated “officially the colleges have been following Competency-Based Teacher Education principles, ... but no one specific approach has been applied in practice. Every individual tutor has his own method(s) of teaching-training. Nevertheless, almost all of them rely heavily on traditional class lectures”.

As regards the in-service teacher-training in Oman (2.3.1.2), it may be said that the educational authorities have always been aware that the period of training in the colleges is insufficient for producing competent teachers, and that training has to

continue after graduation. The training programmes have therefore continued to develop since their establishment in 1972. However, when we examine, for example, the primary kind of Basic Qualifying Training, we find that it contains no more than one target in the teaching of Arabic. It simply says, according to Muḥammad (1987: 10), that the teacher of Arabic should be skilful in composition, reading and writing. This is a very broad aim which is difficult to achieve in the short time devoted to training.

The second kind of training, called Continuous Training, was intended to accomplish four aims, as described also by Muḥammad (1987: 13): (1) the teacher should be well acquainted with the methods of teaching Arabic in all its aspects and capable of explaining to pupils these aspects and their goals; (2) the teacher should be able to analyse the programmes of the Arabic language; (3) the teacher should take every care in pronouncing Arabic words and sentences to pupils, in correcting their errors in both pronunciation and grammar, and encouraging them to read outside the school and learn the right way of expressing themselves, (4) the teacher should continue to improve his knowledge of Arabic, particularly the rules of dictation, calligraphy and textual analysis. Here again we find broad aims which are difficult to be verified and evaluated in practice, and which no school teacher could achieve satisfactorily, since the time is limited. This means that the training programmes for Arabic teachers still need to have their aims reformed into behavioural objectives to make them easy to evaluate (behavioural objectives are covered in section 2.3.2.3.3 in this chapter).

Although there are many in-service training sessions offered by the Ministry of Education, few are specified for Arabic language teachers. For example, there was only one such training session between 1991 and 1994 to study the real status of the teaching of Arabic language in the schools as it is perceived by teachers. This session was held on 2 February 1994 (‘Īsān, 1995: 176–178). Therefore, it can be said that training programmes for all aspects of teaching Arabic in Oman should receive more emphasis to upgrade the competencies of teachers to perform their various roles more effectively.

2.3.2 Programme of Arabic Language Teaching in Oman

This part is divided into three main units, the first of which examines the philosophy of teaching Arabic from the integrative perspective. The second unit presents an overview of objectives, their importance, definitions, and types. The third unit, which itself comprises a number of smaller units, discusses the behavioural objectives in teaching all aspects of Arabic. It also explains the pedagogical importance of each aspect, including the problems in teaching them. This part then concludes the discussion with a brief critical review.

2.3.2.1 Aspects of Arabic Language and their Integration

Before touching upon the general, specific and behavioural objectives of teaching Arabic in Oman, it may be useful to consider generally the two philosophical views of teaching the different aspects of the language. The first argues that all aspects must be taught as an integral unit since there is, naturally, an integration between language competencies. Evidence supporting this tendency is found in the works of various authors. Rivers (1971: 148) states that no language skill should be taught in isolation. Listening comprehension, for example, should be related to and spring

naturally from material used in oral practice or in writing at all stages along with the other areas of language study. This point of view is shared by Wheeldon (1981: 52) when he emphasises the importance of the listening skill. He states: "It is, however, extremely difficult, and also undesirable, to isolate the listening skill entirely from other language activities, since all types of language activity interact, supporting and enlightening each other in the total language-learning process" (see also, for example, Ahmed, 1987: 42-43; Nunan, 1992: 22).

The second view, supported by Qūra (1981: 70) and al-Sayyid (1988: 271), asserts that though language has to be taught as a unit or an integrated whole, it remains necessary in teaching to divide it into aspects even if this division is artificial. This is because each aspect of the language has its own function in the mastering of language. The main rule of dictation and grammar, for instance, is to avoid linguistic errors orally and in writing, while reading and composition aim at increasing the vocabulary, reading quickly and correctly, and writing well or acquiring a good style.

To benefit from the earlier trends in the philosophy of Arabic language teaching, we think that teachers, on the one hand, need to try hard to achieve a balance between all the aspects of Arabic and should not concentrate on a particular one at the expense of the others. On the other hand, they should also keep in mind that the aim of the division into aspects is merely to facilitate the teaching of the language without disturbing or damaging its unity. The integration of the language should remain, therefore, a basic aim pursued continually by all teachers. This

requires that the teachers should possess all the linguistic competencies needed for its achievement.

To examine those competencies in greater depth, we need now to discuss the diverse objectives of the teaching of Arabic at the intermediate stage in Oman, since they represent competencies and there is a strong relationship between them as has been shown in Chapter One of this study. For further details of the relationship, see, for example, Johnson & Shearron (1973: 44); Sullivan & Higgins (1983: 31).

2.3.2.2 General Theoretical View of Objectives

Before dealing specifically with the types of objectives for teaching Arabic in Oman, it may be helpful to consider the importance of objectives in general. The different terms of these objectives should also be clarified by stating their definitions and the relationship between them. This analysis is essential for the subsequent discussion and critique of objectives of teaching Arabic in Oman.

In describing the importance of objectives in any educational programme, Rowntree (1982: 48–51), for example, points out that there are four main benefits of objectives in the teaching/learning process. First, they enable teachers to communicate the intentions of teaching and learning to pupils and colleagues. Second, objectives help teachers to select and organise the content of their teaching, such as appropriate learning activities and teaching media. Finally, they enable teachers to set clearer means of evaluation and assessment (see also Ross, 1973: 10–18; Mager, 1975: 5–7).

Despite these apparent benefits, one of the main problems facing curriculum compilers is the wide variety of terms used to describe objectives and the difficulty

in distinguishing between them. Referring to these problems, Rowntree (1982: 31) again points out that there is much terminological confusion in the literature on educational intention. Statements of purpose, for example, are made at several different levels and there are many different words used to describe them, such as aim, goal, objective, standard, learning outcome, criterion, and so on. Such terminological confusion leads some writers such as Plowman (1971: xxii) to use the words goal and objective interchangeably in his book, *Behavioral Objectives*. This is because, as he (Plowman) states, each is usually incorporated into definitions of the other.

From this point of view, therefore, it is important to avoid confusion in the use of these terms here, and to offer a clear definition and description of those given below, such as “aims”, “general objectives”, “specific objectives”, and “behavioural objectives”. The distinction between these terms and their relationship to one another are discussed as well.

2.3.2.2.1 Aims

Davies (1976: 12) offers a definition of aims: “An aim can broadly be defined as a general statement which attempts to give both shape and direction to a set of more detailed intentions for the future”. Clearly, aims are general statements showing a direction or long-term intention. For this reason, perhaps, Davies himself (1976: 12) criticises the use of aims by saying: “They are an ideal, an aspiration, a direction in which to go. They are visionary in character, and therefore, in a very real sense unreal” (see also Rowntree, 1982: 32–33).

It is therefore obvious that aims are considered abstract statements, whose imprecise breadth and vagueness makes them unlikely to be achieved without being broken down into more precise and narrower objectives.

2.3.2.2.2 General objectives

Gronlund (1978: 6) defines general objectives as “an intended outcome of instruction that has been stated in general enough terms to encompass a class of behaviour (e.g., comprehends the literal meaning of written material). A general instructional objective is, typically, further defined by a set of specific learning outcomes”.

From the definitions of “aims” and “general objectives”, both seem to be broad and vague. Although they have similar characteristics, Davies (1976: 14) describes a slight difference between them:

It is not that goals [general objectives] are in any way better than aims, they simply have a different role and purpose. They convert the question “why is that curriculum or subject being taught?” into the related question “what destination do you have in mind for the learner as far as that curriculum or subject is concerned?”.

As a result, I prefer to use here the term “general objectives” rather than “aims” when I examine the objectives of Arabic teaching in Oman, as shown later in this section, since general objectives focus on the reason for curriculum teaching and encompass a class of specific behaviour.

2.3.2.2.3 Specific Objectives

According to Gronlund (1978: 6) specific objectives are an intended outcome of instruction that has been stated in specific behavioural (performance and measurable)

terms. Similarly, Plowman (1971: xxvi) states that specific objectives “are those that tend to direct pupil activity toward acquiring clearly described traits, attitudes, skills, and knowledge”. According to these definitions, specific objectives are more precise and explicit than aims and general objectives. Furthermore, they are usually short-term rather than long-term. This means that aims and general objectives, in contrast, tend to be broader than specific objectives.

2.3.2.2.4 Behavioural Objectives

This type of objective is described by Gronlund (1978: 6) as a statement of intent, much more precise than aims and more observable and measurable. It also specifies the learned behaviour that the pupil is expected to exhibit as a result of the teaching. In addition, behavioural objectives, as shown by Davies (1976: 14–15), “attempt to describe in the clearest terms possible, exactly what a pupil will think, act or feel at the end of a learning experience”.

It may be worth emphasising that behavioural objectives focus on what pupils should be able to do, as a result of the teaching, that they were unable to do before. Furthermore, they concentrate more on the needs and interests of individual pupils. Therefore, this type of objective offers a practical means of improvement in teaching and learning. Teachers can benefit by having measurable and observable objectives enabling them to plan the most appropriate instruction for helping pupils achieve what is required of them. These objectives also help teachers make an accurate assessment. Pupils benefit by knowing exactly what knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire. Moreover, they know the standard by which their performance is judged.

To conclude the general review of objectives, I should like to point out here that most of the literature examined above states, as mentioned early, that part of the problem is the range terms of objectives and the difficulty in distinguishing between them. I should like to argue, in contrast, that although such a problem exists, it clearly does not prevent us from suggesting that there is an important relationship between the different terms of objectives. My central concern, therefore, is to discuss this relationship, and to illustrate it with some examples as shown below.

One important relationship between aims and another type of objective is that they are all very important for compiling educational programmes, for the success of these programmes depends on perceiving their functions and their advantages. In this context, Rowntree (1982: 31), for example, states

Objectives [in their all levels] generate both the light and heat in educational technology. Their light is that in which we design, evaluate and improve our learning experiences and curriculum plans. Their heat is less productive, arising as it does out of confrontations with those educators who deem it somewhat improper to speak plainly about the changes in thinking, feeling or ability that they hope to encourage in students.

Another relationship is that integration and interrelation. To benefit from aims, for instance, we need to break them down into a set of precise objectives in the planning and direction of the daily classroom activities. In this context, Rowntree (1982: 37) again states: "If we are to know what to strive for in the behaviour or observable activity of pupils, aims must be translated into objectives". In the same way, specific objectives should relate to the aims. The reason is that ignoring aims while defining specific or behavioural objectives will mean losing sight of the basic principles of evaluating the teacher's performance in his educational role.

Finally, in the light of the above discussion, an example of such relationship is given below to illustrate how general objectives, for instance, are translated into behavioural objectives.

Gronlund (1978: 14) presents a general linguistic objective which “*uses critical thinking skills in reading*”. He mentions that this objective is more complex, but that it might be translated into a large number of specific types of behaviour such as: distinguishes between facts and opinion, and between facts and inferences; identifies cause–effect relations; formulates valid conclusions from written material; and so on. These objectives, he adds, seem to be comprehensive enough to clarify the instructional intent and short enough to be observable, measurable, and useful.

2.3.2.3 Objectives of Teaching Arabic Language in Oman

Before recommending suitable training programmes for Arabic teachers, we must identify the essential competencies required for them. This is where it is important to provide an analysis of the objectives for teaching Arabic at intermediate school in Oman.

The two main sources are: Arabic language syllabus (*Minhāj al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya*), and the Arabic language teacher’s guidebooks for intermediate stage. These objectives, as shown in the previous sources, are divided into three types: general, specific, and behavioural objectives, which are described below.

2.3.2.3.1 General Objectives of Teaching Arabic

The general objectives of teaching Arabic at intermediate stage are stated in both the syllabus (WT,² 1995e: 20–21) and the teacher's guidebook (WT, 1998a: 7–8). We can summarise these objectives as follows:

1. Strengthening the faith of pupils in God and his messenger and the belief in the truth of that which the messenger received from God, and encouraging them to follow it strictly.
2. Strengthening the relationship of pupils with Arab Islamic heritage, and with the values and morals upon which this heritage was founded.
3. Implanting in the souls of pupils the love of Arabic and pride in the language, and giving them the confidence in its ability to answer effectively the needs of modern life.
4. Strengthening the relationship between Arabs, and the feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood among Muslims.
5. Increasing pupils' awareness of the dangers which Arab countries face in modern times.
5. Creating a generation that is capable of benefiting from the achievements of human civilisation.
7. Stimulating pupils' artistic taste and appreciation of Omani literature.
8. Informing pupils of the problems from which their society suffers and encouraging them to participate in solving them.
9. Helping pupils acquire as much information as possible about life and the world in modern times.
10. Teaching pupils about the natural resources of their country and their uses.
11. Preserving and strengthening the relationship of pupils with their families.

² WT refers to *Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim* (Ministry of Education) in the Sultanate of Oman.

12. Enabling pupils to learn and practise good behaviour and mental attitudes.
13. Teaching pupils to respect work and working people.
14. Implanting in the minds of pupils the spirit of co-operation and collective work.
15. Training pupils to use language in a precise, clear and logical way.

These objectives can be divided into three domains. The first is a cognitive domain, which includes those objectives emphasising intellectual aspects: knowledge, understanding, and so on. The numbers of objectives representing this domain are 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12. The second is an affective domain, which includes objectives of feeling, attitudes, appreciation, and so forth. This domain includes objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, and 13. The remaining objectives focus on psychomotor domain concerned motor skills. These objectives are found in numbers 14 and 15.

Most of the objectives seem to be applicable to most school subjects. This is possibly because a committee in the Department of Curriculum Development in Oman who establishes these objectives aims to link Arabic with other school subjects. Since the general objectives reflect the philosophy of the community, a single subject could not fulfil them as a whole.

Nevertheless, certain difficulties are inherent in the above statements of the general objectives. Most of these objectives are broad and idealistic. They represent a broad philosophical horizon rather than pedagogical objectives that are limited, realistic, and achievable. Therefore, such objectives are difficult to work towards in practice since they are immeasurable and allow a variety of interpretations. However, it should also be mentioned here that although these objectives are largely

inspirational, they are utilitarian since they can be readily translated into meaningful specific objectives, as is shown in the next point.

2.3.2.3.2 Specific Objectives of Teaching Arabic

As stated in WT (1995e: 23–24) and WT (1998a: 8), this type of objectives can be summarised as follows:

1. Helping pupils to read with the correct pronunciation of letters and words and with the correct intonation.
2. Enabling pupils to read silently and quickly with full understanding.
3. Training pupils how to listen politely to others.
4. Helping pupils to express themselves correctly both orally and in writing.
5. Strengthening the inclination of pupils towards reading inside and outside school.
6. Enabling pupils to write letters and words correctly and clearly according to the accepted rules of dictation.
7. Helping pupils to widen their range of vocabulary.
8. Helping pupils to recognise the correct morphological forms of Arabic words and the right structures of sentences.
9. Teaching pupils the various genres of literature and training them to appreciate the artistic beauty of literary texts.
10. Enabling pupils to understand, analyse, criticise and compare texts.
11. Training pupils how to extract information, correct errors and derive meanings according to the relationship between words and sentences in the text, and how to use dictionaries and reference books.
12. Training pupils in the correct use of punctuation.
13. Enabling pupils to use Arabic in all aspects of life.
14. Implanting in the souls of pupils the love of Arabic.

This list of objectives attempts to cover all aspects of the curriculum of Arabic language teaching such as reading, grammar, literary texts and composition. They are also related to the list of general objectives in section 2.3.2.3.1, especially objectives 3, 7 and 15 stated in that section.

Although specific objectives are much more precise and detailed than general objectives, they are still a broad description of what pupils will be able to do as a result of the teaching and learning sequence. Furthermore, they are still beyond observation and measurement since each comprises a number of smaller objectives. Several behavioural objectives therefore need to be translated for each specific objective, as described below.

2.3.2.3.3 Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Arabic

There is no direct reference to the behavioural objectives in either the syllabus or the teacher's guidebooks. To draw up a list of such objectives, all the teacher's guidebooks related to intermediate stage in Oman need to be analysed. There are seven guidebooks, representing a intermediate stage of three academic years. Three of these guidebooks³ cover the objectives of reading, literary texts and composition. Another three guidebooks⁴ deal with objectives of syntax, morphology, dictation and punctuation. In addition, there is a separate guidebook for teaching Arabic calligraphy⁵ ('Īsā, 1992), which is examined as well.

³ The name of this series is *Dalīl al- Mu'allim li Kitāb Iqra'* (Teacher's Guide to a Reading Textbook).

⁴ The name of this series is *Dalīl al- Mu'allim li Kitāb Lughatī* (Teacher's Guide to a Grammar Textbook).

⁵ The name of this book is *Dalīl al-Mu'allim fī Ta'līm al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī* (Teacher's Guide for Teaching Arabic Calligraphy). However, this book is not addressed directly to the intermediate stage, and it provides general guidelines only.

From the sources described above, it is possible to extract a range of behavioural objectives. A useful way of summarising these objectives is to present them separately for each aspect of the Arabic curriculum. However, it should be borne in mind, in this context, that all aspects of Arabic teaching are interrelated and that the separation is made merely to facilitate research procedures, as we pointed out at the very beginning of this section (2.3.2.1).

The main reason for great dealing with behavioural objectives is that they are abundant in the sources already mentioned. In addition, as can be seen in Chapter Three, the main instrument of this study is a questionnaire. Consequently, the groups of coming objectives represents one of the main sources, beside others, which derived this questionnaire's categories and items from them. Before we consider in more detail the objectives of teaching each aspect of Arabic, we need to describe the general background of these aspects with reference to the relevant literature. Finally, this unit will be concluded with a critical review.

2.3.2.3.3.A Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Listening

Since listening is a receptive activity (Wheeldon, 1981: 57), it is a means of obtaining information and of enjoyment (Plowman, 1971: 50). Since "listening is a complex activity in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind" (Wheeldon, 1981: 53), the main point of training it, therefore, is to develop the level of intelligent listening which enables pupils to understand the core of the spoken language (Ahmed, 1987: 61).

To improve pupil's competencies of listening, the teacher must pay careful attention to the levels of listening activity given below. Firstly, the recognition level

requires the identification and analysis of words and phrases in their structural interrelationship. Secondly, the selection level indicates where pupils extract from the communication those elements expressing the purposes of the speaker or those which suit their own purposes (Rivers, 1971: 142–143).

Despite the apparent importance of teaching listening, a survey of the syllabus and teacher’s guidebooks mentioned earlier in this unit reveals that this aspect has not been given much attention compared with others. Each aspect except teaching listening contains numerous objectives in its own right and has its share in the weekly timetable of the number of class periods allocated to its study. Thus the time devoted to its study indicates the status of each aspect in the Arabic curriculum, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Weekly allocation of class period to Arabic teaching: intermediate stage

Grade	Reading and Literary Texts	Grammar	Composition	Dictation and Arabic Calligraphy	Total
First	2	2	1	1	6
Second	2	2	1	1	6
Third	2	2	1	1	6

On the basis of the data in the table, one can argue that teaching listening is completely ignored since there are no class periods devoted to it. Nor is it assessed in the final examination, which means that it is ignored by both teachers and pupils.

To sum up, the status of listening competencies needs to be re-examined so as to make listening an integral and active part of the Arabic curriculum. It is hoped

that the results of the current study will stimulate greater interest in this aspect, which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been properly investigated in Oman.

Having dealt generally with teaching listening, we can now present its behavioural objectives, which are mentioned in several places in one source only: WT (1995a: 15, 45, 84). They can be summarised as follows. Firstly, observing the right strategies of listening such as paying attention, concentrating, and not interrupting the speaker. Secondly, gathering primary and secondary ideas of what has been heard. Lastly, using the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words appearing in the listening topic.

2.3.2.3.3 B Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Reading

Reading, at its lowest mechanical level is “the interpretation of printed or written symbols into speech or its mental equivalent” (Johnson, 1973: 11). It is therefore central to school education and the acculturation of the pupils. They may experience through their reading a wide range of human emotions and so become more knowledgeable, insightful and humane (Plowman, 1971: 51–52). In other words, reading brings intellectual satisfaction and enrichment of knowledge in the analysis of a writer’s thoughts, feelings and meanings. Reading, therefore, is one important way in which pupils increase their knowledge of language.

To understand a text, a reader, according to Alang (1994: 105), must draw upon and use their current knowledge of its language, which indicates their reading competencies. Pupils, however, cannot improve their reading competency without a teacher. Consequently, to encourage pupils to become habitual readers, the teacher must not only provide them with suitable texts and activities that will focus their

attention on the text, but also show them techniques for approaching texts of various kinds to be read for various purposes.

Other competencies required for training pupils in reading can be found in the analysis of behavioural objectives made by the Ministry of Education in Oman (WT, 1995a, b; WT, 1998a). These objectives can be divided into three categories as follows.

The first category is a cognitive group which includes: (1) defining the main idea of the text by reading it silently and quickly; (2) dividing the text into essential units and choosing a suitable title for each one; (3) defining the secondary ideas of each paragraph in the text; (4) understanding the implicit meaning or underlying ideas of the text; (5) having a brief general knowledge of the author of the text such as the significant events in his life; and (6) observing the sequence of the ideas in the text and their relationship to one another.

The second category comprises psychomotor objectives as follows: (1) reading the text aloud with correct pronunciation, pauses where the meaning requires them, and correct expression to indicate the meaning; (2) using dictionaries to find the exact meaning of difficult or unknown words, and using the new words to create new and meaningful sentences; (3) summarising the text and presenting its content in correct language without missing its main ideas; (4) inflecting the words, both syntactical and morphological, at the time of reading; and (5) knowing the correct spelling of some words from the reading of different texts.

The final category comprises affective objectives as follows: (1) educating in high-principled ideals and noble values to translate them into virtuous behaviour; and (2) stimulating the pupils' patriotism with relevant texts.

2.3.2.3.3 C Behavioural Objectives of Teaching literary Texts

These objectives are also stated in WT (1995a, b) and WT (1998a), and can be divided into three categories. The first of these is a language-oriented group, which promotes various linguistic aspects to enrich the language of the pupils. The importance of this group is expressed by Lazar (1993: 18), who declares that asking pupils to "read a simple poem aloud, possibly accompanied by gestures or mime, may be an effective way of helping them to internalise vocabulary, grammar patterns or even intonation".

The first group includes the following objectives: (1) reading the literary text aloud with correct pronunciation, representing meanings with appropriate accentuation and gestures; (2) using dictionaries to find the exact meanings of new and difficult words; (3) using new vocabulary to construct new meaningful sentences or phrases; (4) summarising the main ideas of the text by paraphrasing them in correct language; (5) discovering the general purpose of the text; (6) knowing the occasion that inspired the writing of the text; and (7) finding out some brief general information about the author of the text such as the significant events in his life.

The second category of objectives covers the study of literary analysis and criticism. Lazar (1993: 19) states: "Literature is a particularly good source for developing pupils' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretation". This category therefore comprises the following objectives: (1) distinguishing between

primary and secondary ideas in the text; (2) explaining each unit of the poem by discussing its ideas; (3) comparison of sentences to choose the best in style and thought, and explaining one's preference; (4) identifying the poet's emotions or feelings; and (5) analysing, criticising and judging the text.

The third category deals with objectives of values and attitudes. This type of objective is to instil social and aesthetic values into the pupils. The positive attitudes, as Cintas et al. (1977: 33) state, will motivate pupils to achieve success and satisfaction with their studying of language. Similarly, Stubbs (1986: 6) indicates: "A main value in studying great literature is that it introduces the discussion of moral issues, and thus leads to the psychological and moral development of pupils". These objectives can be summarised as follows: (1) picking out the rhetorical features and elements used in the text and grasping their aesthetic values; (2) sympathising with the characters in the text and interacting with and responding to the poet's feelings; and (3) eliciting social and noble values and high ideals from the text to translate them into behaviour.

2.3.2.3.3 D Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Grammar

As stated by Alang (1994: 112) "grammar competency is the language-learner's knowledge of conventional use of the grammatical signals of the language". Accordingly, knowledge of grammar is an indispensable tool for a good and accurate language performance (Elgibali & Taha, 1995: 82). Grammar competencies are a necessary precursor for reading, writing and speaking, since these aspects represent sources of grammar input from which the various grammatical features of the language are seen and heard (Alang, 1994: 113). Grammatical knowledge, then,

enables pupils to use and understand the language, and tells us whether what they write and say is correct or not.

Despite the fundamental role of grammar, many pupils think that grammar, as presented by Rivers (1971: 56), is “the rules of a language set out in a terminology which is hard to remember, with many exceptions appended to each rule”. However, to give the pupils confidence in learning grammar, the teacher should try, for example, to facilitate these rules by avoiding these exceptions. Moreover, the teacher should be more critical of the grammatical examples given in textbooks, and choose those which are applicable to the pupils in their lives or which they might use in the future.

With regard to grammar as a pedagogical subject, the Ministry of Education in Oman has produced various behavioural objectives, which are described in WT (1995c, d) and WT (1998b)). These objectives are summarised in two main groups. The first group comprises objectives of the cognitive aspect, such as: (1) understanding some of the grammatical concepts; (2) knowing the correct structure of the components of a sentence; and (3) understanding the relationship between grammar and role of language in life. The second group comprises objectives of the practical aspect as follows: (1) deducing the grammatical rules from the examples; (2) comprehending the influence or role of movements (vowels) in determining the meaning and function of a word in the sentence; (3) inflecting or showing the correct grammatical signs of the words both orally and in writing; and (4) applying the basic grammatical rules of the language accurately in both oral and written composition.

2.3.2.3.3 E Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Composition

There are two types of composition, oral and written, both of which are two sides of the same coin since they are means of communication. Therefore, we believe that the development of each is of equal importance. The behavioural objectives are listed separately under the two headings.

E.1 Oral Composition

Speaking is characterised by being an end, whereas all other aspects of language are just means to this end (Shaḥāta, 1992: 242). It also reflects a person's experiences, culture, emotions, logic and training. Furthermore, speaking is a path to social and business success. Speaking enables a person to express ideas and individuality (Plowman, 1971: 51). Similarly, Rivers (1971: 162) states that through speaking, a person is able to express emotions, communicate intentions, and so reacts to and influences other human beings.

As a result, there is no doubt that encouraging speaking, as oral composition, is an important and primary aim of teaching/learning language. Since it, as mentioned by Rivers (1971: 160), is a learned skill and is improved with practice and careful guidance, its teaching is more demanding on the teacher than that of any other language skill. This means, therefore, that the teacher has to assume several roles to improve the pupils' oral composition. The teacher should, for instance, help and encourage pupils to speak clearly and fluently by giving them frequent opportunities to practise its competencies. According to Plowman (1971: 51), the teacher "may foster self-confidence, personal development, maturity, and the ability to present ideas and convince others". The teacher also needs to choose the

conversation activities, explain them, make sure that all the pupils participate and that they talk more than he does (Elgibali & Taha, 1995: 90).

In light of the importance of oral composition, the Ministry of Education in Oman established a group of behavioural objectives of instruction in it. These objectives are detailed in WT (1995a, b) and WT (1998a), and are divided into two categories. The first category comprises objectives of the presentation of ideas: (1) defining the main elements of the speech topic; (2) selecting and organizing the ideas of the speech in a logical sequence; (3) relating ideas, and building each one on the other by using sentences which are logically linked; and (4) conveying ideas and opinions clearly and fluently with correct pronunciation and structures.

The second category emphasises self-confidence and is composed of the following: (1) observing conversation etiquette or strategies when criticising opinions of others or speaking with them, and thus promoting social relationship with others; (2) convincing others by using the appropriate evidence and explanations; (3) talking to others with self-confidence, conviction and courage; (4) summarising what has been read, using a new style and structures; and (5) adopting or enhancing a positive attitude towards free reading.

E.2 Written Composition

Writing is an important means for human beings to record their thoughts, experiences, commands, and trade and business transactions (Plowman, 1971: 53). However, writing, as stated by Nunan (1992: 35), is not a natural activity, since learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult task for all language users. Nunan adds that all physically and mentally fit people, for instance, learn to

speak. However, they all have to be taught how to write and few learn to write fluently.

Written composition is an advanced level and the final stage of writing since its major aim is fluency and legibility to communicate information. To reach this stage pupils need to have at least three types of knowledge of writing competencies. Firstly, knowledge of the orthographic symbols, which represent the first stage of learning/teaching writing. Lado (1964: 143) states: "To write is to put down the graphic symbols that represent a language one understands, so that others can read these graphic symbols if they know the language and the graphic representation". Secondly, linguistic knowledge, including syntactic structures such as phrases, clauses and sentences to convey messages and meanings. Finally, knowledge of rhetorical structure, that is, how sentences relate to one another to form coherent paragraphs and texts. This also includes the use of certain linguistic devices such as reference markers, for example, "he", "she", "they", and "it", and discourse marks, for example, "however", "moreover" and "therefore" (Alang, 1994: 110–111).

Clearly, understanding and mastery of types of writing knowledge mentioned above are crucial for written composition, which represents the ultimate aim and result of writing. Written composition also, according to Rivers (1971: 243), enables pupils to express their personal ideas or meanings in a polished literary form, which requires the individual selection of vocabulary and structure.

Written composition, therefore, is used either as evidence of successful learning or as a means of learning. It provides feedback to the teacher and pupils on what has been understood (Richards, 1990: 100). Moreover, written composition

can be an important pedagogical tool for facilitating the pupils' learning of the language (al-Batal, 1995: 127).

If written composition is to be used in a pedagogical role, it should be taught with more attention and care to develop this aspect of language. For instance, the teacher should devote more time to writing activities, and should give pupils the opportunity to practise writing. Furthermore, the teacher should help pupils to write correctly by informing them of their mistakes, since, as Mary Thompson (1965) points out "the pupil does not improve his skill if his work is not corrected" (quoting from Lalande, 1982: 140). In addition, the teacher can comment on pupils' writing, which conveys information or expresses original ideas consecutively.

The Ministry of Education in Oman has produced the following behavioural objectives of written composition instruction. These objectives are listed in WT (1995a, b) and can be divided into two groups. The first comprises the objectives of linguistic knowledge that enables pupils to construct and integrate information into cohesive texts: (1) choosing and defining carefully the main elements of a writing topic; (2) selecting the appropriate words and sentences to convey the meaning intended; (3); writing words and phrases without linguistic errors; and (4) presenting ideas and events in a logical order in well-constructed paragraphs of relevant information.

The second group comprises objectives of criticism and represents the highest degree of writing competencies since it includes personal experience and creative writing: (1) using quotations or citations, such as aphorisms and proverbs in suitable

places; (2) expanding the imagination with the use of images and creative ideas in writing; and (3) supporting an idea with adequate and convincing evidence.

2.3.2.3.3 F Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Dictation

An efficient writing system, as pointed out by Smith et al. (1984: 117), needs to express relationships between its symbols to produce a cohesive and coherent message. However, “the problem for the design of such an efficient writing system is that writing systems are essentially linear: a single sequence of symbols must suffice to represent a complex hierarchy of linguistic units” (ibid.: 104).

Therefore, traditional dictation would clearly not be suitable for producing efficient writing according to the definition by Davis and Rinvulcri (1989: 1): “The teacher probably read you the text, dictated it, and then read it a third time so you could check through”. This means that with this type of dictation, all power remains in the hands of the teacher, while the pupils are passive in the classroom.

Dictation, however, can serve other and useful purposes. It is an exercise in aural comprehension and discrimination, a test of the pupils’ knowledge of the combinations of letters representing specific sounds, and a test of their knowledge of structural elements, particularly morphology (Rivers, 1971: 121). Therefore, it should be noted that this type of dictation provides practice in listening comprehension as well as in accurate writing.

Let us now look at why we should give attention to dictation as an aspect of Arabic teaching. One reason is the relationship between dictation and other aspects of Arabic such as reading. Downing (1967: 15), for example, indicates that most educators who have a specialised interest in the teaching of reading agree that those

who want to become competent readers need to learn the relationship between the letters of the alphabet and the phonemes of the language. Therefore, “spelling is the foundation of reading and the greatest ornament of writing” (Venezky, 1980: 12).

Another reason for giving Arabic dictation greater consideration is to facilitate some of its difficulties. One of these difficulties in particular is the shapes of the letters. Each Arabic letter has three or four variations, depending on the position of the letter within the word. The letter *ghayn*, for example, has the following different shapes: غ ، ـغ ، ـغ ، ـغ .

Since pronunciation plays a large part in spelling (Mitton, 1996: 65), another difficulty is the absence of a closer match between these two elements in some words. Examples of these (irregular) Arabic words are: *hādhā* (this), *lākin* (but), *dhālik* (that), *ūlā'ika* (those), and *Ṭāḥa* (a personal name). When writing these words, the letter alif (ā) must be omitted from all of them, although it must be pronounced (al-Sayyid, 1988: 553–554; Shaḥāta, 1992: 313).

From a review of the literature, there is evidence for thinking that these irregular words, represent a difficulty in the writing system. A number of investigators, according to Glushko (1979: 74) and Barron (1980: 162), have reported that words which do not follow the spelling-to-sound rules take longer to pronounce and to read aloud. In contrast, Bauer and Stanovich (1980: 424) state that words which do follow the spelling-to-sound rules can be recognised faster. Accordingly, the most difficult step in learning dictation, as Baron & Strawson (1976: 386) point out, is mastering the use of spelling-to-sound correspondence rules.

The difficulties in dictation may be partly due to punctuation. This is another difficult area that pupils encounter and one that few of them can fully master. However, punctuation is very important, since, as stated by Raimes (1983: 55), it is a feature of the written language, and since, as Gelb (1965: 248) points out, it is a non-phonetic sign added to help in the understanding of writing. Here are some of the more common punctuation marks used in Arabic: comma (،), semicolon (;), colon (:), full stop (.), exclamation point (!), and question mark (?).

The existence of the difficulties described above can lead to the misspelling of words, which may have two implications, according to Alang (1994: 110). The first is that the words may not convey the intended meaning, which will affect the context of the written communication. The second is that the writer may be seen as illiterate or ignorant. In addition, the occurrence of linguistic errors in pupils' writing may produce ambiguity and vagueness. Such errors therefore not only cause misunderstanding, but also reflect the pupils' writing competency (ibid.: 111). Furthermore, since "poor spelling gives a bad impression, people tend to think that someone who cannot spell is dim-witted or slipshod" (Mitton, 1996: 3).

Dictation is clearly very important in training pupils to produce precise and correct writing. To achieve this objective, teachers should possess a wide variety of teaching competencies in this area. For instance, they should understand fully the difficulties of dictation if they intend to solve them satisfactorily. Rivers (1971: 113) states that teachers, for example, must understand the physical aspects of sound production so as to give precise instructions to pupils to correct their faulty production. Davis and Rinvulcri (1989) suggest that teachers can choose for

dictation interactive texts. Pupils, then, not only write down what they hear, but also add their reactions to the topic in writing. The sources of these texts can be extracts from newspapers, articles, magazines and books (p. 5, 8).

To conclude the discussion about dictation teaching, we shall present its objectives as listed in WT (1995d) and WT (1998b). These objectives can be divided into two groups, the first of which covers dictation: (1) teaching the essential rules and basic principles for the accurate writing of letters and words; (2) distinguishing between letters that have similar shapes; (3) distinguishing between letters that are close in pronunciation; and (4) writing any text with no or few spelling errors.

The second group comprises objectives of the use of punctuation: (1) knowing the punctuation signs and their correct positioning; (2) using punctuation signs correctly by putting them in suitable places in the text; and (3) grasping the function of punctuation signs for understanding the written text and reading it correctly.

2.3.2.3.3 G. Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Arabic Calligraphy (Handwriting)

Although the primary aim of writing is the practical recording and transmission of communication, it has also had an aesthetic value throughout history (Gelb, 1965: 229). This point of view is shared by several writers, among them Imamuddin (1983: 11), who describes the aesthetic value of writing as follows: “Viewing fine handwriting is a pleasure to the eye, joy to the heart and fragrance to the soul”.

This general description of handwriting can also be applied to Arabic calligraphy. This point is made by many writers, of which the following are examples. In his

foreword in 1938 to Abbott's (1939: vii) *The Rise of The North Arabic Script*, Sprengling states: "Handwriting as a fine art is no small part of artistic endeavour in the history of Arabic Islam. It has, therefore, received some attention from Western students ever since they became interested in the study of Arabic and Islam". In the view of people who have artistic taste, Arabic writing, according to Bakalla (1981: 104), "appears to be an ornamental type of script". He adds on the same page that calligraphy is a creative art that is achieved only by the gifted. Similarly, Awde & Samano (1986: 35) state: "Calligraphy has come to play a large part in the Arabic visual arts, a process no doubt aided by the intrinsic grace of the alphabet, which lends itself to considerable artistic elaboration". Arabic script has indeed been used to ornament mosques, monuments, ceramics, metalwork, manuscripts, and so on (Chejne, 1969: 28).

Clearly, although Arabic calligraphy has been used for many purposes, it also has an aesthetic and artistic significance. As a result, the specialists (calligraphers) made efforts to develop Arabic calligraphy, which led to the emergence of various types, such as *kūfī*, *naskh*, *thuluth*, *ruq'a*, *dīwānī* and *fārisī* (see, for example, al-Rifā'i, 1990: 75–91; 'Īsā, 1992: 29–45).

The two famous types of Arabic calligraphy, which are very common and widely known nowadays in the most of the Arab world, especially in education for pedagogical purposes, are *naskh* and *ruq'a*. The former is the style of the copyist and it is a printed form of Arabic. Thus, it has been widely used for writing books. The second type (*ruq'a*) is commonly used for the normal purposes of handwriting

such as everyday writing, government documents, letters and so forth (see, for example, Mitchell, 1953: 5; Chejne, 1969: 28, 30).

Since Arabic calligraphy was developed as a handwritten script, combinations or ligatures of letters were invented to facilitate the flow of writing (Awde & Samano, 1986: 34–35). However, this feature of Arabic calligraphy can sometimes be disconcerting to pupils, especially those who wish to master it as an ornamental skill. To make it easier, teachers should take on the role of guide. They need to encourage pupils to concentrate on various points as follows. The first point is paying attention to which letters and parts of letters must go below the line and which must go above the line. This is because, as Beeston (1970: 118) states, “some letters of the alphabet have risers projecting above the main line of script, and others pendentives sinking below it”. The second point is paying attention to the form of the letter when it is written by itself or within others, since, as mentioned earlier, there are different shapes for each letter. The final point is following the main samples that show how to write words and letters to avoid zigzag writing. This is because zigzag writing, according to Tenney (1980: 219), like other types of distorted writing, is usually more difficult to read than normal writing.

The discussion on the teaching of Arabic calligraphy ends with a summarised list of its behavioural objectives as shown by ‘Īsā (1992: 81–28): (1) knowing the handwriting rules such as the specific traits of each letter in respect of its size, shape, position above or below the line and connection with other letters so as to apply these rules in mastering the calligraphy; (2) producing clear and beautiful handwriting; (3) writing quickly and accurately at the same time; (4) acquiring positive attitudes and

values from practising handwriting, such as cleanliness, attention, observation, patience, and deliberation; and (6) enhancing one's appreciation of Arabic calligraphy by observing the commonly accepted form of handwriting such as harmony between the position and dimension of letters and words which represent the qualities of beauty in it.

2.3.2.3.3 H. Behavioural Objectives of Teaching Arabic: Critical Review

We have discussed the importance of aspects of the Arabic language, their pedagogical status, and the sources of the behavioural objectives of teaching these aspects at the intermediate stage in Oman. Below are some comments on the unit (2.3.2.3.3) as a whole.

Behavioural objectives are certainly different from specific objectives, in that the activity to be performed and the acceptable level of performance are defined more precisely. In other words, these objectives state what pupils should be able to do after the learning experience that they could not do before. Each behavioural objective contributes to the achievement of specific objectives and ultimately to the fulfilment of the curriculum.

In view of the importance of behavioural objectives in teaching Arabic, the Ministry of Education in Oman has stated a large number of them for teachers to aim at in their daily classroom duties. However, it should be noted that teachers can add more objectives that they think will be useful to the pupils, since these objectives are in harmony with the general objectives established by the Ministry and with the basic principles of learning.

Nevertheless, although these objectives stated by the Ministry include all three domains of objective taxonomy – cognitive, affective, and psychomotor – there is no proper balance between them. In each aspect of teaching of Arabic, the cognitive domain constitutes the main part while the other two domains have been neglected.

It is clear from both the syllabus and teacher's guidebooks that some aspects of Arabic such as listening, dictation and Arabic calligraphy have been neglected, for the objectives of teaching these aspects have not been given the same status as that of the other objectives. This situation could produce some undesirable results. The teachers might ignore these aspects by using the class periods or lessons allocated to them to teach other aspects such as reading, literary texts and grammar. Consequently, the pupils will be ignorant of these aspects as well, and it can be said that many pupils have had difficulties with writing or spelling since leaving school. Perhaps they do not know the rules of writing because the teachers did not give enough attention to these aspects of Arabic. Such undesirable results seem to have led to the accumulation of pedagogical problems with no practical solutions. Some of these problems might be the failure to attain the main general objectives of teaching Arabic, since all aspects of Arabic are interrelated.

Clearly, the status of the neglected aspects of Arabic needs to be re-examined so as to integrate them as an active part of the Arabic curriculum. To accomplish this aim, the linguistic competencies, as a first step, should be identified, which was the impetus for this study.

2.4 Conclusion

The present chapter has given an overall view of the teaching of Arabic at intermediate school in Oman. Its main purpose was to examine the linguistic competencies required for this task, since language is the main instrument of communication in teaching.

It has been shown that much has been written about the general characteristics of language and some specific characteristics of Arabic. Since language is one of the most important subjects in education, its features need to be analysed for translation into linguistic competencies. A survey of the literature of this broad topic shows that, to the best of my knowledge, no such research has been undertaken in Oman. Therefore, Chapter Two has attempted to explore the somewhat neglected connection between language and education.

The role of teachers in contemporary times was examined with regard to the influence of new developments in education and in society generally. A survey of the literature has shown the need for a thorough revision of the educational system in Oman to prepare teachers for changing circumstances. This can be achieved by determining the competencies that enable teachers to carry out their duties.

The teaching of Arabic language in Oman was discussed in great detail. The training of Arabic language teachers was investigated from the historical and current perspectives. Despite rapid developments in both pre-and in-service training since 1977, fundamental reforms are still needed to produce enough effective teachers and thus effective teaching of the Arabic language.

The philosophy of teaching was the next topic of analysis. The Ministry of Education's requirement that the aspects of teaching Arabic should be integrated was found to be largely ignored in practice. Unfortunately, their separate treatment by teachers has created gaps and thus a fragmented view of the language.

Objectives of teaching and learning were discussed with regard to their importance in successful education. Various types were defined and examined from the aspect of translation into specific competencies. It was found to be essential to distinguish between general, specific and behavioural objectives, and to inform teachers about the objectives that they should work to achieve, since some of them were unrealistic and some were vague. In addition, this part of Chapter Two looked at the current status of Arabic language teaching in the school curriculum as well as its various objectives as defined by the Ministry of Education in Oman.

A survey of objectives of Arabic teaching in intermediate school revealed that some aspects such as dictation and calligraphy are often neglected or pursued with a minimum of effort by both teachers and pupils in favour of other aspects such as reading and grammar, which remain the primary aspects of the Arabic syllabus. It seems, therefore, that many teachers of Arabic do not have a clear idea of the objectives of Arabic teaching, and they do not understand the importance of each aspect to the mastery of the language.

To sum up, an identification of the linguistic competencies is the essential basis of any language syllabus, they are mainly responsible for enabling teachers to fulfil their teaching tasks successfully.

Linguistic competencies can be extracted from various sources, such as characteristics of the language, the roles of teachers, and an analysis of the components of Arabic language programmes. As a result, this chapter provides a useful basis for the questionnaire and proposed observation card for this study. These instruments are discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter also provides the theoretical background for the discussion, analysis, and explanation of the findings in Chapter Five of this study.

The Methodology of the Fieldwork

This study, as stated in the Introduction, was carried out to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the intermediate schools in Oman. A by-product of the study was the suggestion of the use of the observation card. Chapter Three, therefore, discusses in detail the structure of the research, the methods adopted and the procedures followed.

This chapter is intended to shed light on the following related issues: (1) to identify the population and the samples selected for data collection; (2) to develop the two instruments – the questionnaire and the observation card used for data collection – by describing their purposes, sources, validity, and their first and final versions; and (3) to present the application of the questionnaire after estimating its reliability and obtaining the permits for conducting it in the field; (4) to describe the statistical procedures and treatment required for the analysis of the data. Some preliminary consideration of theoretical issues, related to the content of this chapter, are given attention to make the procedures followed more tangible and logical.

3.1 The Population under Study

The first step in selecting a sample is to define the population, which is “the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to be generalizable” (Gay, 1981: 86). The population of the present study consisted of three types of subjects, some of them Omani and others from various

Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan and Tunisia. The subjects comprised both male and female and are described as follows:

(1) Teachers of Arabic at the intermediate schools during the academic year 2000/2001 in two regions.

- a. The Governate of Muscat, where Arabic teachers total 252: 129 male and 123 female.
- b. The Interior Region (al-Minṭaqa al-Dākhiliyya), where Arabic teachers total 228: 120 male and 108 female.

It should be mentioned here that some teachers teach both the intermediate and secondary stages, where these two stages are combined in one school. In addition, male teachers are employed only in boys' schools and female teachers only in girls' schools. Table 3.1 summarises the statistics of Arabic teachers as shown in *Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim* (WT, 2001: 100).

Table 3.1 No. of Arabic Teachers According to Region & Sex

Sex	Region		
	Muscat	The Interior	Total
Male	129	120	249
Female	123	108	231
Total	252	228	480

The reason for choosing the Governate of Muscat was because its teachers come from various parts of the country. They prefer to live in the capital because of the greater availability of educational facilities than in the provinces. They also have access to public and commercial libraries as well as to cultural events that are seldom held elsewhere. Therefore, it was assumed that these teachers were representative of the teachers in other parts of Oman. The reason for choosing the Interior Region was because I come from there and I have relevant personal experience since I was a

teacher for two years. I also used to visit many schools to advise student teachers from Colleges of Education who were doing their teaching practice. That meant that I knew many of those teachers personally, which facilitated the fieldwork.

In answer to the question of why were teachers selected from only two regions, it should be pointed out here that it was difficult to apply this study and collect data from all the Arabic teachers in Oman, owing to the large size and demographic diversity of the country. There are ten educational regions in Oman, and the time and resources currently available were not sufficient to cover the whole area.

(2) Arabic inspectors in the Directorate General of Education in eight regions, which are representative of Oman as a whole except two regions: *al-Wuṣṭā* (only one inspector) and *Masandam* (only two inspectors). During the academic year 2000/2001, there were 101 inspectors in the eight regions. Table 3.2 gives a breakdown of the statistics by region as stated in WT (2001: 195).

Table 3.2 No. of Inspectors According to Region

Region	Male	Female	Total
Muscat	13	0	13
al-Bāṭina	17	2	19
al-Bāṭina Janūb	13	0	13
al-Dākhiliyya	14	1	15
al-Sharqiyya	7	1	8
al-Sharqiyya Shamāl	8	0	8
al-Zāhira	10	1	11
Zafār	11	3	14
Total	93	8	101

(3) Experts in Arabic curriculum development in the Directorate General of Curriculum Development, a department in the Ministry of Education. During the academic year 2000/2001, the total of these experts was 7.

3.2 Permits for the Data Collection

To carry out the fieldwork, three permits had to be obtained. The first step was to send to the Cultural Attache at the Omani Embassy in London a letter dated 7 August 2000 from my supervisor, explaining the kind of data required and where they needed to be collected (see Appendix 5.). The Cultural Attache then sent a letter to the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman to support the researcher in his task. The first permit was issued on 5 September 2000 to confirm that the researcher was a student and needed to carry out fieldwork (see Appendix 6).

The second permit was to come from the Office of Research and Development (*al-Maktab al-Fannī li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Taṭwīr*) at the Ministry of Education. From that office I obtained two letters on 9 September 2000. The first was addressed to the Directorate General of Curriculum and Training to distribute the instrument to the experts in Arabic curriculum development (see Appendix 7). The second was addressed to the Directorate General of Education in eight regions to distribute the instrument to the inspectors that were under their supervision (see Appendix 8).

The third permit was obtained from the Directorate of Educational Supervision (*Dā'irat al-Ishrāf al-Tarbawī*) in the Directorate General of Education in the Interior Region on 25 November 2000 and in the Governate of Muscat on 9 December 2000. The two letters were addressed to the head teachers of the

intermediate schools to distribute the instrument to the Arabic teachers (see Appendices 9 and 10).

3.3 The Study Instruments

In addition to investigating the essential linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic, this study proposed an evaluation instrument for these competencies. To achieve these aims, two instruments were applied to the collection of data in the field. One was a questionnaire to identify the linguistic competencies, and the second was an observation card for the evaluation of these competencies.

Therefore, the following sections of this chapter discuss, firstly, the construction and application of the questionnaire, with particular attention to the points stated below:

1. Aims of the questionnaire.
2. Primary sources of its items.
3. Description of the first draft
4. Establishing its validity.
5. Description of its final version.
6. Establishing its reliability.
7. Description of the procedures of its final application.

However, the construction of the observation card is described in detail for only points 1 to 5 above. The reason is that it was merely a proposed instrument, which means that it was beyond the scope of this study to apply it in the field.

3.4 The Questionnaire

3.4.1 The Aim of the Questionnaire

The primary aim of the questionnaire was to identify the linguistic competencies necessary for Arabic teachers at the intermediate schools in Oman so as to achieve the effective teaching of the required aspects of Arabic. The findings from the questionnaire, as a result, are the essential component of the construction of the second instrument in this study, that is, the observation card.

The questionnaire used in this study represents the main instrument. That is because the questionnaire is “widely used by educators to obtain facts about current conditions and practices and to make inquiries concerning attitudes and opinions” (Van Dalen, 1966: 301). Furthermore, it is used to investigate almost any aspect of teaching or learning and to obtain information from teachers about their teaching methods. It also provides a large amount of information in an economical form (Nunan, 1989: 62). Therefore, the questionnaire was the most suitable instrument for this study since the data collection depended on the opinions of the sample selected for it.

However, there are disadvantages in using a questionnaire, as stated also by Van Dalen (1966: 301). Some of the subjects might not give accurate answers, or they might falsify answers or ignore questions, or they might not give the questionnaire enough thought and so complete it carelessly. To minimise these defects, therefore, the questionnaire must be carefully constructed according to certain criteria. As Good (1966: 219) points out, such criteria are related “to motivation of the respondent, significance of questions, simplicity of responses, avoidance of unnecessary specifications or details, pertinence to the situation of the

respondent, clarity of purpose and questions, phrasing of items to facilitate summarisation of responses". These criteria were applied to the questionnaire of this study by establishing its validity and reliability.

3.4.2 Sources of the Questionnaire

According to the theoretical framework of this study as discussed in Chapters One and Chapter Two, various sources were used for the categories and items of the questionnaire as follows.

3.4.2.1 Literature Review

This source included the results of previous studies containing lists of linguistic competencies in different countries and at various educational stages. The competencies required for Arabic teachers are probably similar throughout the Arab world since the Arabic syllabus also seems to be similar in much of the region. This could be because the Arabs, according to Harb (1983: 74–75), share a set of values, customs, attitudes and interests that are derived from their historical and religious background. Many studies, as a result, have been conducted in the Arab countries, for example, 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ (1986), Madkūr (1988), al-Ḥasan (1992), and Ghazāla & 'Uthmān (1993). For full details of these studies, see Chapter One, section 1.2.4.3.

Although the teaching of Arabic, as Jadwat (1987: 361) points out, "cannot exactly be equated to the teaching of a European language, the evidence in the literature on the teaching of foreign language acquisition indicates that the learning processes that an individual learner goes through are practically the same in all languages". So it seems that the teaching of Arabic should or could benefit from the successful methods of teaching foreign languages. Therefore, the present study

sought to benefit from some earlier studies of the linguistic competencies required for teaching English as a mother tongue or as a second or foreign language, for example, Stieglitz (1972), Loheyde (1977), Bilotta (1983) and al-Rabiey (1995). For details, see Chapter One, section 1.2.4.3.

Related to the literature review is also a survey of books by various writers on the methods of teaching Arabic, for example, Mujāwir (1974), Samak (1979), Ibrāhīm (1984), Ismā'īl (1991) and Madkūr (1991). In their books these authors mention a number of competencies required for teaching different aspects of Arabic.

3.4.2.2 Examination of the characteristics of language

The examination of general characteristics of language and specific characteristics of the Arabic language are also another source used for the categories and items of the questionnaire. This is because language is one of the most important subjects in teaching and learning. Its features, therefore, can be translated into linguistic competencies. This topic has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two (see section 2.1).

3.4.2.3 Analysis of the role of the Arabic teacher

It has already been mentioned that the Arabic teacher has special roles where linguistic competencies related to aspects of teaching Arabic can be derived. For details, see Chapter One, section 1.2.5.2, and Chapter Two, section 2.2.

3.4.2.4 Analysis of Curriculum of Teaching Arabic

Analysis of the syllabus for teaching Arabic and the teaching manuals (Guidebooks) supplied by the Ministry of Education in Oman for the intermediate stage are also the main source used for developing the questionnaire. These sources, as shown in

Chapter Two (section 2.3.2.3.3), comprise groups of behavioural objectives for teaching various aspects of Arabic. As described in the previous chapter, there is a relationship between objectives and competencies. Competencies represent statements translated into behavioural objectives that can be observed and evaluated.

3.4.3 The First Draft of the Questionnaire

There are two types of questionnaire: closed (categorical) and open-ended (inviting a free response). The categorical type, as Van Dalen (1966: 302–303) states, usually consists of a prepared list of particular questions or items and a choice of possible responses. To indicate their answers, subjects mark “yes” or “no”; tick, circle, or underscore one or more items from a list of answers; or they list a series of statements in order of their importance. This type of form is easy to administer and complete, keeps the respondent’s mind focused on the subject, and facilitates tabulation and analysis. The open-ended type of questionnaire permits respondents to answer freely and fully in their own words and their own frame of reference.

On the one hand, the closed form is more appropriate, as Good (1966: 220) states, when the researcher’s objective is to classify the respondent, the respondent’s opinions on the specific topic are well structured, there are no major obstacles to communication, and the researcher is well informed about the subjects. On the other hand, the open-ended form is preferable when the opposite of these conditions prevails.

To benefit from the advantages of both forms, the questionnaire for this study included closed and open-ended questions. From the sources described in section 3.4.2 above, a series of linguistic competencies, represented by 223 items, was

selected for the first draft of the questionnaire. The items included sub-competencies as divisions of some of the main competencies. The list was classified under eight headings representing aspects of teaching Arabic as follows:

1. Listening (28 items).
2. Reading (46 items).
3. Literary Texts (39 items).
4. Oral Composition (26 items).
5. Written Composition (25 items).
6. Grammar (19 items).
7. Dictation and Punctuation (18).
8. Arabic Calligraphy (22 items).

The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert-rating scale. This scale, as described by Van Dalen (1966: 317–321); Upshaw (1968: 95) and Bailey (1978: 358–359), belongs to ordinal scales, which place data in a clearly defined order by transforming qualitative data into quantitative measures that are more amenable to analysis and interpretation. The scale that was introduced by Likert gives a weight of 1 to 5 to the range of answers presented to subjects, who are required to select for each statement one of five or so response categories included in the instrument. The same numerical values are always given to the responses that are most strongly in favour of the phenomena. Therefore, the subjects were asked to assess each competency according to its degree of importance. In the scale used in the current questionnaire and described below, 0 represented no importance attached to the competency, whereas 4 represented the greatest importance attached to it. The degrees of the scale were as follows:

- 4 = Very important (*muhimma jiddan*)
3 = Important (*muhimma*)
2 = Uncertain (*ghayr muta'akkid*)
1 = Less important (*qalilat al-ahamiyya*)
0 = Not important (*ghayr muhimma*)

A letter addressed to the subject was enclosed with each questionnaire. The letter opened with spaces for the completion of personal (demographic) data of the subject, including profession (expert, inspector or teacher), educational region, name of school (for teachers only), and career experience (more or less than one year). The aim of the questionnaire was explained in the first paragraph of the letter. The subjects were then asked to complete the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate point on the scale to indicate their choice of answer, and they were reminded to mark only one of the spaces for each statement. At the end of each category, all the subjects were asked to add any competencies which they had experienced and which had not been included in the questionnaire. They were also asked to add at the end of the questionnaire any suggestions regarding the teaching of Arabic from their perspective.

3.4.4 The Validity of the Questionnaire

3.4.4.1 The Meaning of Validity

The need for validity arises, as Nachmias and Nachmias (1982: 138–139) point out:

because measurement in the social sciences is, with very few exceptions, indirect. Under such circumstances, researchers are never completely certain that they are measuring the precise property they intend to measure ... Clearly, it is always necessary to gather some

sort of evidence that provides confidence that a measuring device does, in fact, measure what it appears to measure.

Validity, then, is the most important characteristic of any research procedure, and it is defined as “the extent to which the procedure actually accomplishes what it seeks to accomplish or measures what it seeks to measure” (Fox, 1969: 367). So it is not surprising that there are several different types of validity, since we know that instruments are designed for a variety of purposes, and validity can be evaluated only in terms of purpose. The types of validity are classified under three headings and it is important to examine one or more of these types for any instrument to be used for a particular study.

3.4.4.1.1 Logical validity

This type includes content and face validity and it “refers to the degree to which a test appears to measure what it purports to measure” (Gay, 1981: 111). This type is essentially determined by judgements issued by experts in the field in question. They are asked to evaluate the various aspects of the instrument’s content by making a comparison between what ought to be included in it, given its intended purpose, and what is actually included (ibid.: 112).

Therefore, it performs an important function in constructing and formulating measuring instruments (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1982: 139–140). This type of validity is more suitable than others “when the data being sought are relatively fixed and finite” (Fox, 1969: 369). It is also the strongest technique available to the investigator “for many data-gathering procedures, such as questionnaire and interview guides” (ibid.: 369–370).

3.4.4.1.2 Empirical validity

It includes concurrent and predictive validity. Concurrent validity refers to “the degree to which the scores on a test are related to the score on another, already established, test administered at the same time or to some other valid criterion available at the same time” (Gay, 1981: 113). Predictive validity refers to “the degree to which a test can predict how well an individual will do in a future situation.... It is determined by establishing the relationship between scores on the test and some measure of success in the situation of interest” (ibid.: 114–115). It can be said, therefore, that the empirical validity is demonstrated by comparing the results obtained from an instrument with those obtained from an external criterion.

However, the empirical validity suffers from some defects. With regard to concurrent validity, its essential basis, as Fox (1969: 374) states:

is the relevance and validity of the criterion. There can be no compromising standards on this point: The criterion *must* be valid. This amounts to saying that we have little opportunity in the social disciplines for using concurrent or congruent validity because we have few instruments or criterion measures of demonstrated validity.

With regard to predictive validity, Fox again (1969: 375) and Gay (1981: 116) state that the researcher usually has to wait for a long time before criterion data can be collected to know whether or not his predictions came true and to evaluate the extent to which he was correct.

3.4.4.1.3 Construct validity

This is evaluated by both judgement and external criteria. It entails “relating a measuring instrument to an overall theoretical framework in order to determine

whether the instrument is tied to the concepts and theoretical assumptions” (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1982: 142). The construct validity is defined as “the ability of the instrument to distinguish between groups known to behave differently on the variable or construct under study” (Fox, 1969: 372). Therefore, it is an unobservable trait, such as intelligence, which explains behaviour. This means that we cannot see a construct, although we can observe its effects (Gay, 1981: 111–112). For further details of these three types of validity, see Burroughs (1975: 78–82) and Bailey (1978: 57–61).

After discussing the types of validity, it is useful to examine the types of evidence used to judge the validity of any instrument. This is for the purpose of applying them to establish the validity of the current questionnaire. These types of evidences are listed by Selltitz et al. (1962: 552–5574) and Scates and Yeomans as shown in Good (1966: 224–225), and in my view they can be classified under two main headings: the instrument and the respondents.

The types of evidence related to the instrument can also be divided into three groups:

1. Linguistic Formulation of Items, for example:
 - a. Can the question be misunderstood?
 - b. Does it contain difficult or unclear phraseology? and
 - c. Is it perfectly clear and unambiguous?
2. Correctness of Information, comprising:
 - a. Does the question need to be more concrete, specific, and closely related to the respondent’s personal experience?

- b. Is the content sufficiently general and free from spurious concreteness and specificity? and
- c. Is the information consistent, in agreement with what is known, and in agreement with expectancy?

3. Form and Organization

- a. Is the form of response easy, definite, uniform, and adequate for the purpose?
- b. Is the question approached in a natural way?
- c. Is it in the correct psychological order?
- d. Does the question have extractive power?
- e. Will it be answered by a large enough proportion of respondents to have validity? and
- f. Is the item sufficiently inclusive?

The second main category of types of evidence is concerned with the respondents and includes the following questions:

- 1. Do the respondents have the information necessary to answer the question?
- 2. Will they give the information requested? and
- 3. Do their replies express a general attitude and only seem to be as specific as they sound?

To sum up, there are many types of validity, each of which has its own suitability for a particular test or instrument. Therefore, it is very important for an investigator to choose the type that seems to be most appropriate for the study being undertaken. As noted earlier, the face validity is preferable when the data being collected or already available are approximately fixed and finite. In addition, it is the strongest technique for several data-gathering instruments such as questionnaires.

The main instrument used in the current study was the questionnaire to identify the most and least important competencies required for Arabic teachers at the intermediate schools in Oman to be successful in the classroom. The most suitable procedure to evaluate the validity of this questionnaire, therefore, was likely to be logical validity, which is determined essentially by judgement. The procedure for determining the validity of the current questionnaire is described below, using the types of evidence included as a guide.

3.4.4.2 Examining the Validity of the Questionnaire

To assess the internal (face) validity, the following steps were taken. Between 10 and 30 September 2000 the first draft of the questionnaire (see section 3.4.3) was presented to a pilot panel of eleven specialists in Arabic teaching methods. Five of the specialists were from the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University and six from three colleges of education under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education. The names and occupations of these specialists are given in Appendix 11. The letter addressed to them included a request to complete the blanks reserved for their personal data: name, occupation, qualifications and place of employment. The specialists were also asked to check the following points in the questionnaire:

1. The accuracy of the linguistic formulation of the items.
2. The logical order and hierarchy of the items in each linguistic aspect.
3. The comprehensiveness of the questionnaire in covering the full range of essential linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic.
4. The suitability of the five-point scale.
5. The validity of the questionnaire in achieving its aim.

6. The clarity of the instructions in the letter addressed to the subjects of the study for the application of the questionnaire.

The specialists were also asked in an open-ended question on general opinion to comment on the structure of the questionnaire; to add, if necessary, any other linguistic competencies not included in the questionnaire; to delete inappropriate items; and to provide the researcher with any relevant information or suggestions to improve the teaching of Arabic.

In addition, to organise the feedback obtained from the specialists, they were asked to complete an evaluation sheet at the end of the questionnaire so as to extract their opinions on the six points listed above. (See Appendix 12 for the letter addressed to the specialists and the evaluation sheet attached to it.) The four-point scale used for this sheet was as follows:

4 = I fully agree (*uwāfiq bi- daraja kabīra*)

3 = I mostly agree (*uwāfiq bi- daraja mutawassiṭa*)

2 = I agree to some extent (*uwāfiq bi- daraja qalīla*)

1 = I do not agree (*lā-uwāfiq*)

3.4.4.3 The Specialists' Responses to the Questionnaire

All the responses from the specialists were analysed to assess their opinions. Firstly, the findings from the evaluation sheet are summarised by using a percentage, and then the specialists' comments and suggestions are discussed.

On the evaluation sheet, nine of the eleven specialists (81.8 per cent) chose point 4 ("I fully agree") for items 1 to 5. Therefore, these items were given a high level of support, which meant that they were considered to be sufficiently clear and

accurate. For item 6, all the specialists chose point 4. This 100 per cent support meant that the instructions in the letter addressed to the subjects of the study were very clear and comprehensible.

With regard to the specialists' comments and suggestions, it should be pointed out that there was a relationship between their responses to the evaluation sheet and their comments on the questionnaire as a whole. This meant that there were some suggestions, described below, relating to each item on the evaluation sheet, except item 6, which was given full support.

Two specialists (18.9 per cent) chose point 3 ("I mostly agree") for items 1, 2, 3 and 5. With regard to item 1 (the accuracy of the linguistic formulation), these specialists stated that some of the subjects of the study might have difficulty in understanding the meaning of "competency", since the common concept of its meaning is "skill" rather than "competency". This comment supports the following statement by Van Dalen (1966): 304): "a researcher is often amazed when respondents draw many different meanings from questions that he thought were perfectly clear".

Therefore, to avoid confusion, the specialists suggested including in the questionnaire a suitable definition of the concept of "competency". This was added to the letter addressed to the subjects, which was enclosed with the final version of the questionnaire. The meaning of "competency" was given in a footnote as follows: "In this study, the linguistic competency refers to a body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that every teacher of Arabic needs to possess so as to be capable and

qualified to improve his pupils' ability to achieve fully the linguistic objectives stated".¹

In addition, to remind the subjects, when completing the questionnaire, of the meaning of "competency", each aspect of Arabic was started by this sentence: "The teacher should be able to improve the ability of his pupils to practise and master the following competencies".

With regard to item 2 on the evaluation sheet (the order and hierarchy of the items in each aspect in the questionnaire), the comments showed that the order of some of the items should be changed as follows. Under the fourth aspect (Oral Composition), competency number 24 (to respect the opinions of others during a discussion) in the first draft was moved to number 11(c) in the final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix 13). The reason for this change was to keep all sub-competencies relating to conversation strategies in one place. Another example was the fifth aspect (Written Composition), where competency number 18 (choosing topics that represent aspects of written composition) in the first draft was changed to number 1 in the final version. In addition, number 16 (gathering the data of writing from their original references) was changed to number 2 in the final version. The reason for these changes was that, according to the specialists, these items should be at the beginning to enable pupils to know the topic of their essay and which references would be most suitable in helping them to write about it. The pupils could then follow the strategies of writing to produce an original piece of work.

¹ We compiled this definition and it was mentioned in Chapter One of the present study, section 1.1.3.4 as operational.

For item 3 on the evaluation sheet (the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire in covering most of the linguistic competencies), two specialists (18.9 per cent) chose point 3. This meant that some competencies were missing. Therefore the following competencies were included in the final version of the questionnaire. Under the third aspect (Literary Texts) were added: number 7 (specifying the genre of the prose text as a story, an oration "*khutba*" and essay); number 8 (knowing the type of literary school to which the text belongs); and number 27 (writing brief details of the author of the text from relevant references) (see Appendix 13).

Under the fifth aspect in the questionnaire (Written Composition) were added two competencies: number 14 (using the essential footnotes during the writing), and number 20 (speed of writing). Under the seventh aspect (Dictation and Punctuation) were added three competencies: number 4 (correct pronunciation of letters and words), number 12 (knowledge of the placing of punctuation signs), and number 19 (practising several linguistic activities to treat or cure the common errors).

For item 4 on the evaluation sheet (the suitability of the five-point scale), nine specialists, as stated above, chose point 4 ("I fully agree"). This meant that this scale was suitable for the purpose of the questionnaire. However, one specialist (9.1 per cent) chose point 2 ("I agree to some extent – *uwāfiq bi-daraja qalīla*") and another chose point 1 ("I do not agree"). These two specialists suggested that it was not necessary to use the five-point scale and that it would be better replaced with a three-point scale. This could be done by omitting two choices: "uncertain" and "not important". In support of the omission of the first choice, they stated that the respondent to the questionnaire must be sure of the answer since he was a specialist

in the teaching of Arabic. The second choice should also be omitted because none of the competencies listed in the questionnaire was unimportant since they were all concerned with aspects of the teaching of Arabic. Therefore, it was decided to consult a specialist in educational measurement and statistics at Sultan Qaboos University to determine which type of scale would be most suitable for the questionnaire (his name is given in Appendix 11).

This specialist advised the use of an odd-point scale, with three or five points, keeping the middle point “uncertain” clear so as to give the respondent a chance when he was not sure of the degree of importance of a particular item. For this reason and because the subjects of the questionnaire did not include pupils, who might be confused by this type of scale, the original five-point scale of the first draft of the questionnaire (see section 3.4.3) was used in the final version.

With regard to the fifth item in the evaluation sheet (the validity of the questionnaire in achieving its aim), the majority of the specialists (81.8 per cent) agreed that the questionnaire was valid, which meant that it measured what it was supposed to measure. However, two specialists indicated that it suffered from a lack of validity. They explained their opinion by stating that the questionnaire included three items that were not fully relevant to its purpose. They were the following numbers included under the eighth aspect (Arabic Calligraphy) in the first draft: 5 (good posture while writing); 6 (holding the pen correctly when writing); and 7 (acquiring good habits such as neatness and patience by practising calligraphy).

According to the specialists, these items (5, 6 and 7) were related to educational aspects rather than linguistic competencies. In addition, they do not

seem to be of much significance since they have not helped pupils directly to acquire any of the basic competencies of calligraphy. The specialists advised their replacement with others as follows: 5 (bearing in mind the letters that go below the line, such as *jīm* and *mīm*; 6 (mastering the writing of words); and 7 (achieving a balance between speed and the mastery of Arabic Calligraphy competencies). These new competencies were substituted in the final version of the questionnaire described below.

3.4.5 The Final Version of the Questionnaire

Following the discussion of the specialists' responses to the first draft of the questionnaire and an analysis of their feedback, several revisions were made as indicated above. It could be said that the questionnaire was face and content valid since its items and instructions were clear and comprehensible. This meant that it could achieve its main purpose, which was to obtain the opinions of Arabic teachers and specialists on the importance of linguistic competencies at the intermediate stage of education in Oman. The revisions, which resulted in the final version of the questionnaire, are summarised as follows:

1. Introducing a definition of the concept of "linguistic competencies" in the covering letter addressed to the subjects. This letter (see section 3.4.3) also included blanks for the completion of the subjects' personal data, described the aim of the questionnaire, and gave instructions on answering the questions.
2. Changing the order of some of the items in the questionnaire under the aspects of Oral and Written Composition.
3. Adding eight new competencies: numbers 7, 8 and 27 to the third aspect (Literary Texts); numbers 14 and 20 to the fifth aspect (Written Composition); and numbers 4, 12 and 19 to the seventh aspect (Dictation and Punctuation).

4. Replacement of item numbers 5, 6 and 7 under the eighth aspect (Arabic Calligraphy).
5. Inclusion of some sub-competencies. For instance, competency number 5 under the second aspect (Reading) included five sub-competencies; competencies numbers 9 and 25 under the third aspect (Literary Texts) included three sub-competencies each; and competency number 24 included five sub-competencies.

Consequently, the final version of the questionnaire consisted of 231 items instead of the 223 in the first draft. These items were classified under the same eight headings or aspects and in the same order as before (see section 3.4.3). However, in the final version, the number of items in three of the categories differed as follows: (1) Literary Texts comprised 42 items instead of 39; (2) Written Composition comprised 27 items instead of 25; and (3) Dictation and Punctuation comprised 21 items instead of 18. At the end of each category and at the end of the questionnaire, spaces were provided for adding any linguistic competencies not yet included. In addition, the original five-point scale was used.

Following the above revisions, the construction of the questionnaire, as shown in Appendix 13, was completed and it was ready for pilot testing. The test was to verify the clarity of the items and instructions of the questionnaire and whether the whole document was fully understood or not. Another aim was to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. To accomplish these aims, the following procedures were carried out.

Firstly, the questionnaire was distributed to a primary sample of thirty participating male and female Arabic teachers from four schools in the Interior Region (*al-Minṭaqah al-Dākhiliyya*), randomly selected between 26 and 30

November 2000. The responses obtained were examined by the researcher to determine whether the items and instructions were comprehensible. No major difficulties were noted, for all the subjects had answered the questionnaire. Therefore, no revisions were considered necessary, which meant that the questionnaire was ready for the final application following the next stage.

3.4.6 The Reliability of the Questionnaire

3.4.6.1 The Meaning of Reliability

Any research based on measurement must be concerned with the accuracy or reliability of the measurement (Cronbach, 1951: 297). Reliability means “the accuracy of the data in the sense of their stability, repeatability or precision” (Fox, 1969: 353). Reliability is also “an indication of the extent to which a measure contains variable errors” (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1982: 144). Therefore, an instrument “is reliable if it consistently yields the same results when repeated measurements are taken of the same subjects under the same conditions” (Van Dalen, 1966: 315). In contrast, “an unreliable test is essentially useless; if a test is unreliable, then scores for a given sample would be expected to be different every time the test were administered” (Gay, 1981: 117). In other words, reliability can be defined in two ways, according to Aleamoni (1981: 131). The first describes the instrument’s capability of producing stable responses from one time to another. The second describes the consistency or degree of agreement among the respondents.

Accordingly, “reliability is expressed numerically, usually as a coefficient; a high coefficient indicates high reliability” (Gay, 1981: 117). The basic statistic used to estimate reliability, as Fox (1969: 353) points out, is the correlation. Correlations of +1.00 indicate perfect reliability, whereas correlations at or close to 0.00 indicate

no reliability, and correlations at intermediate points between 0.00 and +1.00 indicate intermediate levels of reliability. However, Fox (1969: 353) also adds that perfect reliability is seldom achieved, and it is the intermediate correlations that are found in practice.

There are four methods of measuring reliability. Each is determined differently and deals with a different kind of consistency. One method is the test-retest. According to Gay (1981: 118), it is the degree to which scores are consistent over time in order to know how consistently the test measures, whatever it measures. The procedure for determining the reliability of this technique, as shown by Nachmias & Nachmias (1982: 146), is to administer the test (a questionnaire, for example) to an appropriate group. After some time, long enough for the test to be forgotten but not so long that a change would be expected, the same test is administered to the same group. The two sets of scores are correlated and the coefficient² obtained is the estimate of reliability. If the resulting coefficient is high, then the test also has a high level of reliability.

Another method is the equivalent or alternate-form reliability. This method requires the construction of two forms of a measuring instrument which can be considered equivalent. Each is designed to measure the same concept, although using different items, and both are administered to the same group of respondents in one session. The two sets of measurements are then correlated to obtain an estimate of reliability (Bailey, 1978: 62).

² "The correlation coefficient showing the extent to which two sets of scores secured from the same group are related to one another" (Burroughs, 1975: 159).

Although this method eliminates the worst of the memory effect of the test–retest method, there is the problem of determining whether the two forms of an instrument are truly equivalent. To achieve this, there must be similarity in the number of items, content, format, structure, level of difficulty, directions for administration, scoring and interpretation in both forms (Burroughs, 1975: 72; Gay, 1981: 118). This problem appears because

in most instances researchers find it difficult enough to develop one form of an instrument, let alone two. Moreover, with instruments like questionnaires seeking information, or studies of reactions to specific situations there is no sensible way of asking the same or similar questions twice (Fox, 1969: 355).

Fortunately, to avoid this problem, there are other methods, described below, of estimating reliability, which require administering a test only once. As Cronbach & Warrington (1951: 169) state, these methods are used to indicate the consistency of measurement where only one form of a test is available.

An example of such a method is the split-half or odd–even reliability test, which is based on the internal consistency of the instrument. The procedure is to administer the total instrument once to one group, and then divide the instrument into two halves: odd items in one half and even items in the other half which is a common method of division (Gay, 1981: 120). The reason for using the odd–even basis is explained by Fox (1969: 357) as follows “the odd–even is hardly needed because ... this procedure also eliminates the possible biasing effects of factors like fatigue or loss of interest causing a respondent to omit the last several items or questions or answer them with less care than he answered the items on the earlier part of the instrument”.

Therefore, scores derived from half of the items of the test are correlated with the scores derived from the remaining half (Travers, 1964: 186). The purpose of this is to estimate the consistency between the two halves.

However, the main problem with the split-half method is ensuring that the two halves actually measure the same thing (Bailey, 1978: 62). In addition, the coefficients of this method do not provide the same information as the correlation between two forms given at different times (Cronbach, 1951: 298).

The fourth and final method for estimating reliability is one developed by Kuder (K) and Richardson (R). It relates to the rational equivalence reliability which “is not established through correlation but rather estimates internal consistency by determining how all items on a test relate to all other items and to the total test” (Gay, 1981: 121). It is also called inter-item consistency or homogeneity, since it presumes that when the items or tasks of an instrument are measuring similar things, they are internally consistent (Gay & Airasian, 2000: 174). Furthermore, “internal consistency reliability estimates are widely used for educational tests” (Wiersma & Jurs, 1990: 162). The KR method requires, like the split-half method, one administration of the single test to one group of respondents. However, it does not require the test to be split in half. Instead, it uses data on the proportion of respondents answering each item correctly (Nitko, 2001: 69).

Nevertheless, the KR method can be used only for tests that ask for no more than two responses from the intended subjects, which can be graded right or wrong. In other words, this method is useful only for dichotomously scored items as in dual choice items “0 or 1” (Nitko, 2001: 69). As a result, this method has been modified

into a more general version called Cronbach Alpha or Coefficient Alpha, which checks the reliability of a test that has two or more responses, that is, dichotomously or polytomously scored items (Gay & Airasian, 2000: 174; Nitko, 2001: 69). Cronbach Alpha refers also “to an internal property of a test, which is a product of the statistical relationship among the items” (Travers, 1964: 187).

Another aspect of reliability is errors of measurement, which indicate the factors that cause an instrument to have less than perfect or a lack of reliability. According to Bailey (1978: 61), unreliability “may be due to such things as question or answer categories so ambiguous that the respondent is unsure how he or she should answer, and thus does not answer consistently. A question of which the respondent says, ‘I do not know what he or she wants’ is unreliable”.

Gay (1981: 117) also points out that other errors can be caused by conditions of administration such as the failure to follow the directions properly, or by the current status of the person taking the test, such as tiredness and lack of motivation. Nachmias & Nachmias (1982: 144) suggest other causes of errors, namely, technical difficulties such as the breaking of a pencil while the respondent is completing a questionnaire. In contrast, Gay (1981: 117) states that “high reliability indicates that these sources of error have been eliminated as much as possible”.

To sum up, there are different methods of measuring reliability, each dealing with a particular kind of consistency or degree of agreement among the responses. Unfortunately, all of these methods produce some problems, that of the test–retest, for instance, being the length of the interval between the two tests. The equivalent forms and the split-half method require the construction of two forms that are

essentially equivalent. The KR method can be used only for an instrument that asks for no more than two responses. Therefore, the Cronbach Alpha formula is a modified version of KR and is suitable for an instrument having more than two responses or choices. Bearing in mind the range of methods available to measure reliability, “certain tests are more appropriate for certain kinds of data and researchers have to understand the different criteria that determine the selection of a particular data analysing test before deciding on which one of them is more appropriate for their particular data” (al-Salmi, 1994: 52).

Since the questionnaire of the current study uses more than two choices for rating its items and its categories or aspects are measuring similar things (linguistic competencies), its reliability was estimated according to the Cronbach Alpha formula described above.

3.4.6.2 Examining the Reliability of the Questionnaire

To establish the internal consistency of the final version of the questionnaire (see section 3.4.5), the data obtained were processed between 1 and 4 December 2000, using the SPSS programme (*The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*)³. Since the questionnaire of the current study comprised eight categories representing aspects of teaching Arabic (see section 3.4.5), the reliability coefficient of each individual category was established first, followed by the reliability of the whole questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 3.3 below.

³ SPSS “is a set of programmes that allows you rapidly to analyse huge amounts of data, and that it lets you carry out in a few moments [a] statistical analysis that would be impractical without the aid of a computer” (Foster, 1993: 1). For further details of this system, see Bailey (1978: 353)

Table 3.3 Reliability (R) Coefficient (C) of the Internal Consistency of the Questionnaire^a

Aspects of teaching Arabic	No. of items	RC (Alpha)
Listening	28	0.84
Reading	46	0.84
Literary Texts	42	0.89
Oral Composition	26	0.79
Written Composition	27	0.80
Grammar	19	0.82
Dictation & Punctuation	21	0.74
Arabic Calligraphy	22	0.88
The whole questionnaire	231	0.96

^aNote: Includes categories, using Cronbach Alpha (no. of cases = 30).

From the table, the scores of Alpha fall between 0.7 and over 0.9. This means that the results obtained were sufficiently high, since the scores are close to +1.00, indicating high reliability (see section 3.4.6.1). Therefore, this situation shows an adequate and even a high level of internal consistency reliability for the questionnaire and its categories. Since the findings from the table suggested that the items in the questionnaire were consistent, this instrument was ready for the final application.

3.4.7 The Final Application of the Questionnaire

On receipt of the permit from the Directorate General of Education (see section 3.2) to carry out the fieldwork, a full list of intermediate schools was obtained from the local educational authorities in Muscat and the Interior Region. It included the name and location of each school and the number of its teachers. It should be noted that some intermediate schools are attached to primary schools, some are attached to secondary schools, and others are in separate locations.

It has been mentioned in section 3.1 that it would have been difficult to apply this study to all the Arabic teachers in Oman. So the selection of a sample representative of the population is a very important stage of data collection, since a sample, as Rees (1989: 77) points out, is “a sub-set of a population, a set of some of the measurements which comprise the population”. Therefore, two procedures – random and systematic selection – were followed to select the sample for this study.

Random selection means that every element in the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. It is the best known and most commonly used procedure and the best way of obtaining a representative sample. The widely used and most satisfactory technique is to use a table of random numbers as the basis of selection (Fox 1969: 332–333; Gay, 1981: 88).

As a result, a sample of 50 schools was selected. All the schools in each regions were placed at random on an individual list. The list for Muscat comprised 68 schools and that for the Interior Region 85 schools. These statistics were extracted from WT (2001: 44). From each list it was decided to choose the third school named and then every third school after that down to the end of the list (for example, 3, 6, 9, 12 and so on). Of the total number of schools, 22 were selected from Muscat and 28 from the Interior Region. The Arabic teachers in these schools, to whom the questionnaire was distributed, numbered 231, representing 48 per cent of the total of 480 Arabic teachers at the intermediate schools in these two regions (see Table 3.1 in section 3.1). These statistics are summarised in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Arabic Teachers and Schools Selected for the Questionnaire

	Region		Total
	Muscat	The Interior	
Male teachers	66	48	114
Female teachers	62	55	117
Total teachers	128	103	231
No. of schools	22	28	50

Note: The sample = 48 per cent of the total of 480 Arabic teachers.

The distribution of the questionnaire began with visits to the selected schools from 10 December 2000 onwards. Discussions were held with the head teachers and senior teachers of Arabic regarding the nature and aims of the study so as to gain their support for distributing the questionnaire to all the Arabic teaching staff.

At about the same time, 101 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all the Arabic inspectors in all eight educational regions (see Table 3.2 in section 3.2). Personal visits were made to some of the regions and discussions held with the senior inspectors of Arabic to distribute the questionnaire to their colleagues. It is difficult to meet all inspectors in their offices, since they are usually travelling around the regions and visiting schools to carry out their fieldwork. The senior inspectors in other regions that were very remote were sent their copies of the questionnaire through the Ministry of Education's postal service. It should be pointed out here that the study included all these inspectors because their number was not large and they had particularly important educational experience. It was assumed that they could identify the competencies required with a high level of confidence as a result of their close contact and direct dealing with teachers throughout the school year. Therefore, they would be expected to know the teachers' linguistic needs and demands. Another seven copies of the questionnaire were

distributed to the experts in Arabic curriculum development. This particular group was included in the study because experts performed a number of important tasks in accordance with the demands of their position. For example, they would be aware of educational trends, all aspects of educational development, the philosophy of their society and its general objectives. Therefore, such knowledge and experience enabled them to identify the linguistic competencies suitable for each educational stage. The distribution of the questionnaire took six days, from 10 to 15 December 2000.

The questionnaires were collected between 20 and 24 December 2000. They were then examined for completeness and accuracy of the responses. It was found that some of the questionnaires had not been returned. Others were missing answers to some of the questions. Also, some of the questions were not answered correctly (for example, the first option of all the items in the questionnaire was selected), and some of the questionnaires had pages missing. This meant that a number of respondents showed little interest in giving their answers, although others showed more interest by giving acceptable answers and adding important ideas on the teaching of Arabic.

As a result, the problematic questionnaires and those whose respondents had teaching experience of no more than one year were removed from the statistical analysis. Nevertheless, the additional opinions and suggestions mentioned in the eliminated questionnaires were given careful consideration, for they provided useful information, especially with regard to the first-year teachers. This is because new teachers may experience some difficulties when moving from the ideal world of the

college classroom to the reality of everyday teaching. The total number of completed questionnaires was 250: 173 teachers, 70 inspectors, and 7 experts.

3.5 The Observation Card

3.5.1 The Aim of the Observation Card

Observation, according to Burroughs (1975: 98), "is the most basic and most direct method of securing behavioural data which exists". This is because observation can provide information that may not be acquired by other kinds of inquiry. For example, it gives a view of the climate, rapport, interaction, and functioning of the classroom, which is available from no other source (Evertson & Holley, 1981: 90). Moreover, it helps us draw a more concrete and real picture of a teacher (Centra & Bonesteel, 1990: 11). Therefore, observation is a useful tool for collecting and providing data about teaching and it is a requirement in most goal-setting systems. It should remain the major source of data used in teacher evaluation (McGreal, 1988: 22).

In spite of the importance of observation, the findings of the pilot study conducted during the second term of the academic year 1998/1999 in Oman, showed that there was no special observation card to evaluate linguistic competencies. All that was available was a general observation card (see Appendix 4) for use by the inspectors of all the subjects with no regard to the nature of an individual subject (for detailed information on the pilot study, see the Introduction of this thesis). Clearly, a special observation card was urgently needed. The current study has designed such a card, the main purpose of which is to evaluate Arabic teachers in the classroom to

find out how far they possess the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the intermediate stage.

3.5.2 The Sources of the Observation Card

The categories and items of the current observation card were selected and developed on the basis of some of the findings from the first instrument (the questionnaire: see section 3.4). However, its external design and form were modified according to the relevant literature that discusses, theoretically, the systems and bases of observation, as explained in the next section. In addition, the following studies of the construction of a general observation card were consulted: ‘Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ (1986); Maḥfīẓ al-Dīn (1991); al-Ḥasan (1992); Ghazala & ‘Uthmān (1993); al-Rabīy (1995); ‘Īsā (1996); and al-Kandīrī (1999).

3.5.3 The First Draft of the Observation Card

In relation to the construction of an observation card, various essential factors should be considered. They are described by Burroughs (1975: 100–101) and Evertson & Holley (1981: 101) and are summarised as follows:

1. identifying the given range of behaviour that is to be observed;
2. focusing carefully on the item of interest by giving the terms of the instrument an operational or behavioural meaning;
3. defining the range of behaviour and categorising it unequivocally by knowing the meaning of each item and keeping the classification and recording as simple as possible;
4. realising that each category should be simple and refer to a single type of behaviour in its positive present-tense form; and
5. establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument.

The authors add that if sufficient attention is not given to these considerations, then the instrument will fail to focus clearly on the items of interest.

Therefore, the first draft of the observation card was designed and classified under two main headings representing aspects of teaching Arabic which were included in the first instrument of this study (the questionnaire: see section 3.4). The two categories consisted of 24 items (linguistic competencies) representing the highest level of importance or the most important competencies rated as “very important” (*muhimma jiddan*) according to the statistical analysis of the findings from the questionnaire. The first category was Reading, comprising ten items, and the second was Grammar, comprising fourteen items. Each item on the observation card represented one linguistic competency, which was stated operationally and behaviourally, and began with the positive present-tense form for observation and measurement.

To evaluate the level of linguistic competencies possessed by a teacher, as listed on the observation card, a five-point Likert scale (described in section 3.4.3) was used as follows:

4 = Very high (*‘ālin jiddan*)

3 = High (*‘ālin*)

2 = Average (*mutawassif*)

1 = Weak (*da ‘if*)

0 = Absent (*mun ‘adim*)

A separate sheet was designed and placed at the beginning of the observation card for the recording of the basic data of the teacher under observation, including:

name, sex, levels and dates of qualifications, length of teaching experience, periods of in-service training (with dates), name of school, class, period, subject of lesson, and date of the observation. Space was also allocated for the basic data of the observer: name, profession and signature.

To help the observer complete the observation card accurately, another sheet was added as page 2, briefly explaining its aim and giving instructions on how to use the card in the classroom. Accordingly, the observer was reminded to bear in mind the following points:

1. All the spaces for personal or basic data should be filled in.
2. The teacher was to be observed while giving the lesson so as to evaluate his level of linguistic competencies.
3. Only one of the appropriate points on the scale provided should be ticked to indicate the observer's opinion.
4. The observer should bear in mind that the card included ten competencies for the teaching of Reading and fourteen for the teaching of Grammar.
5. The period of observation should run from the beginning to the end of the lesson.
6. When the period of observation was finished, the observer should enter the appropriate marks or scores and a general estimate in the table provided at the end of the card.

Moreover, there was an additional option "*I could not observe*" available if, for any reason, the observer could not observe the teacher's behaviour during the observation.

3.5.4 The Validity of the Observation Card

Face validity, which is determined by judgement, is the most suitable procedure for estimating the validity of an instrument whose data are defined and fixed (see section

3.4.4.1). Therefore, the first draft of the observation card was distributed to ten specialists (whose names and occupations are listed in Appendix 14), between 15 and 17 January 2001. In the letter addressed to them, the specialists were asked to evaluate the card, taking into account the following points:

1. The comprehensiveness of the sheet for the basic data of the teacher under observation and the observer, that is, did it include all the essential data.
2. The accuracy of the linguistic formulation of the contents.
3. The operational and behavioural formulation of the items (linguistic competencies).
4. The logical order and hierarchy of the items in each linguistic aspect.
5. The ability to observe and measure these competencies.
6. The clarity of the instructions to the observer for the observation.
7. The suitability of the five-point scale for the evaluation of the items.
8. The validity of the card in achieving its aim.

The specialists were also asked to make any requisite changes and add any suggestions for the improvement of the observation card. At the end of the letter, space was provided for the completion of the specialists' personal data; name, qualifications, occupation, and place of employment. An evaluation sheet was also included at the end of the observation card to record the specialists' responses to the eight points above. (See Appendix 15 for the letter addressed to the specialists and the evaluation sheet attached to it). This sheet was based on a four-point scale as follows:

4 = I fully agree (uwāfiq bi-daraja kabīra)

3 = I mostly agree (uwāfiq bi-daraja mutawassīṭa)

2 = I agree to some extent (uwāfiq bi-daraja qalīla)

1 = I do not agree (lā uwāfiq)

On the return of the first draft of the observation card from the specialists, their responses on the evaluation sheet were analysed. For items 1, 6 and 7, all the specialists chose point 4 ("I fully agree"). The conclusion was, therefore, that there was unanimous agreement that the card covered all the necessary personal data, the instructions to the observer were clear, and the five-point scale was suitable.

For items 2 and 3, seven specialists chose point 4 ("I fully agree"), while three chose point 3 ("I mostly agree"). This indicated that the latter three specialists did not fully agree that the competencies' formulation was completely accurate. As a result, some linguistic corrections were made to increase its clarity. For item 4, eight specialists chose point 4 ("I fully agree"). However, two chose point 3 ("I mostly agree") and commented that the order of those competencies should follow the logical order of the basic steps taken by the teacher when giving the lesson. Therefore, the sub-competencies of competency number 2 in the first category (Reading) were rearranged as follows:

- (b) "expressing the desired meaning during reading by intonation and suitable gestures" was moved to (c);
- (c) "fluency and confidence in reading aloud" was moved to (d); and
- (d) "reading correctly without linguistic errors" was moved to (b).

The new arrangement could increase the validity of these competencies for observation and measurement since they were now in a logical order.

For item 8 (the validity of the card in achieving its aim), six specialists chose point 4 ("I fully agree"). However, four chose point 3 ("I mostly agree"), stating that

the additional option "*I could not observe*" should be deleted. In their view, such an option could encourage the observer to pay less attention during the observation and therefore be used as an "escape option". They also pointed out that space should be provided beside each competency for the observer to write any comments.

As a result of the analysis and discussion of the specialists' responses, all their opinions were found to be useful and were incorporated into the final version of the observation card. Its structure and the order of its components were the same as those of the first draft (see section 3.5.3), apart from the changes suggested by the specialists, which are summarised as follows: (1) some corrections to the linguistic and behavioural formulation of some competencies; (2) slight rearrangement of some of the sub-competencies; and (3) substituting the option "*I could not observe*" with extra space for comments. (The final version of the observation card is shown in Appendix 16.).

As mentioned in section 3.3, it was not within the scope of this study to put this observation card into practice. Before developing an observation card, it is necessary, firstly, to identify its items (for example, competencies). Therefore, the main focus in the present study was on the first instrument (the questionnaire), whose purpose was to identify those competencies required for developing the observation card. Since this took most of the time available, the proposal of the observation card included only a selected group of competencies that should be useful for Arabic teachers.

Therefore, it was not necessary to establish the reliability of the card in this case. It is hoped that a future study will put the card into practice and develop it

further. In the light of the findings of this study, it is also hoped that the current card will be the basis for developing other comprehensive cards. Such cards could be used by Arabic inspectors in the Ministry of Education and in teaching practice by specialists in curriculum and teaching methodology of the Arabic language in the colleges of education in Oman.

3.6 Statistical Procedure for Data Analysis

Although this study developed two instruments, the statistical analysis was applied only to the first of these (the questionnaire). The relevant data obtained were analysed by using the SPSS programme (see section 3.4.6.2 for details). Means⁴ were calculated for each linguistic competency to identify and rank them in order of importance. Further details of means are given in Owen & Jones (1982: 71–80) and Rees (1989: 24–38).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the procedures followed in carrying out the fieldwork. It has discussed different aspects of the data collected from the subjects of the study to identify the most and least important linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at intermediate schools in Oman. From this followed the proposal of an observation card. Aspects covered included subject selection, development of the appropriate instruments, and the statistical procedure used for data analysis. This chapter dealt with the theoretical aspects discussed in the relevant literature as well

⁴ The mean is “found by adding all the scores in a group and dividing this total by the number of people in the group” (Burroughs, 1975: 156).

as the background and factors to be taken into account for the accurate application of the methodology of the study.

In summary, the procedures to carry out the fieldwork were as follows. First, three groups of people (male and female) were chosen: (1) Arabic teachers in a number of intermediate schools in Muscat and the Interior Region; (2) Arabic inspectors from the Directorate General of Education in eight regions; and (3) experts in Arabic development. To collect the data from these subjects, the open-ended questionnaire, as the main instrument, and the observation card were constructed, specifying their aims and sources, as a first draft for evaluation.

Therefore, three permits were needed to carry out the fieldwork: (1) a letter from the Ministry of Higher Education to confirm the request to collect the data; (2) a letter to the Director General of Education, requesting the distribution of the questionnaire to the inspectors; and (3) a letter addressed to the head teachers of the selected schools.

After obtaining the permits for the data collection, the validity of the instruments was checked by a group of specialists in Arabic curriculum and teaching methodology. Their comments and suggestions were analysed and several revisions were made to ensure the face and content validity of the instruments. Thus the final version of these instruments was achieved. The questionnaire only was tested on a pilot sample of teachers to determine the comprehensibility of its items and instructions.

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by the application of the Cronbach Alpha formula. The results were judged to be sufficiently high, indicating

an adequate level of internal consistency reliability. The questionnaire was now ready for its final distribution among the selected sample of Arabic teachers as well as the inspectors and experts for their opinions on its content. After checking for completeness and accuracy those questionnaires which were returned, the data were processed using the SPSS programme and the findings analysed.

The findings from the questionnaire are presented and analysed in Chapter Four.

Statistical Analysis of the Findings of the Questionnaire

The main purpose of the present study is to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the preparatory schools in Oman. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to a sample of the study to rate the importance of these competencies from their perspective. The 231 items of the questionnaire were divided into eight aspects of teaching Arabic: Listening, Reading, Literary Texts, Oral Composition, Written Composition, Grammar, Dictation and Punctuation, and Arabic Calligraphy. This chapter analyses the statistical results of the questionnaire. It should be noted that the items in each aspect are classified according to their level of importance. The items in each level of importance are classified according to the relevant ideas and topics and sometimes cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects. In addition, the categories in each level of each aspect of teaching are placed in the logical order of the basic steps taken by the teacher when giving the lesson.

4.1 The Statistical Treatment of the Data Collected

The statistical method that was applied to the analysis of the data was the mean. Means were calculated for each linguistic competency to identify and rank these competencies in order of their importance. Using the statistical results obtained from the sample of the study (250 respondents), the list below shows the classification of

the competencies of each linguistic aspect on a five-point scale ranging from Very Important to Not Important.

1. Very Important, if the value of the mean was 87.5 or more.
2. Important, if the value of the mean was between 62.5 to less than 87.5.
3. Moderately Important, or Uncertain on the five-point scale, if the value of the mean was between 37.5 to less than 62.5.
4. Less Important, if the value of the mean was between 12.5 to less than 37.5.
5. Not Important, if the value of the mean was less than 12.5.

4.2 The Statistical Findings of Aspects of Teaching Arabic Analysis

4.2.1 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Listening

This aspect comprised 28 items. Tables 4.1 to 4.3 show the levels of importance of these items according to the statistical analysis. It appears that all competencies were important, although some were more important than others. No item was rated at the two lowest levels: less important and not important.

4.2.1.1 Very Important

Table 4.1 shows linguistic competencies 1 to 6 for teaching listening. They were judged to be more important because the value of their means was more than 87.5 and they are ranked according to their level of importance.

Table 4.1 The Very Important competencies for teaching listening

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Paying attention and concentrating while listening	4	96.6
2	Following the speaker to the end of the speech	5	93.9
3	Extracting the main idea of the speech	16	90.9
4	Not interrupting the speaker during the speech	6	88.8
5	Summarising in a good oral style what has been heard	25	88.2
6	Organising the ideas and events that have been heard	3	88.1

It is clear from Table 4.1 that six of the twenty-eight items in this aspect were rated as very important competencies since the value of their means was between 88.1 and 96.6. These competencies can be classified into two groups in terms of their topic:

1. The etiquette of listening to be observed by the listeners: items 1, 2 and 4.
2. Gathering, organising and summarising the ideas of the speech: items 3, 5 and 6.

4.2.1.2 Important

Table 4.2 presents competencies from 7 to 27 that were rated important because their means were between 87.4 and 65.7. This suggests that the majority of items related to teaching listening were rated at the second level of importance. According to Table 4.2 these competencies can be divided into five groups based on their logical order in the listening lesson:

1. Aural distinguishing of sounds: item 10.
2. Level of comprehension: items 9, 12, 17, 20 and 24.
3. Recognition of ideas: items 13, 14 and 18.
4. Level of evaluation and appreciation: items 7, 15, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 27.
5. Level of application and synthesis: items 8, 11, 16 and 21.

Table 4.2 The Important competencies for teaching listening

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
7	Appreciating and taking into account the importance of listening as an art or a part of linguistic training	28	87.4
8	Benefiting from what is heard to develop a linguistic, intellectual and cultural repertoire	27	86.8
9	Remembering the ideas that are heard	2	86.1
10	Distinguishing between sounds that are similar in vocalisation in the speech	1	85.0
11	Gathering the important information from the speech	21	84.3
12	Using the context to understand difficult words in the speech	7	81.5
13	Recognising and following both the main and secondary ideas in the speech	9	81.4
14	Noticing the train of thought or ideas in the speech	11	80.9
15	Distinguishing between correct and incorrect linguistic usage in the speech	18	79.1
16	Summarising in a good written style what has been heard	26	78.7
17	Understanding the implicit meanings or underlying ideas suggested by the speaker	10	77.8
18	Understanding the relationship between the ideas	12	77.6
19	Distinguishing between the right and wrong ideas presented in the speech	15	77.0
20	Understanding the long sentences used in the speech	8	76.9
21	Writing down or recording the important elements and ideas of the speech	24	76.4
22	Evaluating the speaker's success in conveying the message	22	75.5
23	Distinguishing between the ideas that are relevant or irrelevant to the subject of the speech	14	73.2
24	Distinguishing between the concepts, information and facts stated in the speech	17	73.2
25	Evaluating the content of the subject of the speech by indicating its strengths and weaknesses	23	70.0
26	Discovering any contradictions in the subject of the speech	19	69.5
27	Defining the level of comprehensiveness of or lack of ideas in the speech	13	65.7

4.2.1.3 Moderately Important

Table 4.3 provides only one moderately important item, the mean of which was 57.5. This item was placed in the list at number 28 and refers to deductive thought or “predicting the content of the speech”.

Table 4.3 The Moderately Important competency for teaching listening

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
28	Predicting the content of the speech	20	57.5

4.2.2 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Reading

This aspect contains 46 items. It should be noted from Tables 4.4 and 4.5 that most items were considered important competencies and some of them very important. The means of all the items in the aspect of teaching reading fall between 94.3 and 64.1. Therefore no items were rated at the lower levels of moderately, less and not important.

4.2.2.1 Very Important

Table 4.4 shows that items 1 to 10 of the total of forty-six were rated very important, since their means were between the high levels of 94.3 and 87.6. The results of the table can be classified under five headings related to teaching reading:

1. Competencies that focus on training pupils to practise some aspects of reading aloud: items 1, 3, 4 and 7.
2. Reading silently: item 10.
3. General understanding of the vocabulary and ideas in the text: items 5 and 6.
4. Choice of suitable texts for reading: item 8.

5. Competencies that are performed by the teachers: items 2 and 9.

Table 4.4 The Very Important competencies for teaching reading

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Pronouncing the letters correctly when reading aloud	8	94.3
2	The teacher should correct pupils' linguistic errors	40	91.7
3	Reading aloud correctly without linguistic errors	12	91.3
4	Confidence and fluency in reading aloud	10	90.9
5	Understanding the main idea of the text	15	90.8
6	Understanding the meaning of difficult words from the context	16	89.7
7	Expressing the desired meaning when reading aloud with appropriate intonation and gestures	9	89.6
8	Choosing reading text that suit the level of the pupils and are useful to them	3	88.5
9	Discovering and diagnosing pupils' reading weaknesses by using various methods	41	88.3
10	Not saying words aloud when reading silently	4	87.6

4.2.2.2 Important

This level, as Table 4.5 shows, contains thirty-six items, 78.3 per cent of the total of forty-six included in this aspect. It seems that all of these items from 11 to 46 were important since the values of their means were very close, ranging from 87.2 to 64.1.

Table 4.5 The Important competencies for teaching reading

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
11	Understanding precisely what is read silently	6	87.2
12	Distinguishing between the shapes of letters, especially those which are similar in outline	1	87.2
13	Distinguishing between sounds of letters, especially those which are similar in pronunciation	2	87.1
14	Preparing remedial linguistic activities to cure pupils' reading weaknesses	42	87.1

15	Deducing the main idea of each unit or paragraph in the text	20	85.8
16	Deducing the noble values and principles from the text	30	85.4
17	Using the reading lesson to understand grammatical rules	38	84.8
18	Using new vocabulary to create meaningful sentences	17	84.7
19	Deducing useful information from the text	29	84.4
20	Developing a positive attitude among pupils towards free reading	44	83.5
21	Dividing the text into its essential units or paragraphs	19	82.7
22	Eloquent oral expression of the text that is being read	32	82.3
23	Applying the punctuation signs correctly when reading aloud	11	82.
24	Using the reading lesson to develop the competencies of oral and written composition	37	82.
25	Developing pupils' interest in reading for various purposes	46	81.7
26	Observing the extent of the train of thought and its associated ideas in the text	25	81.4
27	Deducing the main idea of the text	14	80.3
28	Giving every pupil the opportunity to read aloud	39	80.3
29	Using reputable language dictionaries	18	80.3
30	Making a written record of items of importance during silent reading	7	80.0
31	Benefiting from what has been read and applying its principles to real life	34	79.6
32	Identifying pupils' reading preferences	43	79.4
33	Distinguishing between the main and subsidiary ideas	22	79.2
34	Analysing the subsidiary ideas in each paragraph	21	78.7

35	Distinguishing between the right and wrong ideas	24	78.7
36	Preparing various reading activities to fulfil pupils' reading preferences	45	78.1
37	Reading silently with speed	5	77.7
38	Using the reading lesson to develop listening competencies	36	76.8
39	Presenting a correctly written summary of the text that has been read	33	76.4
40	Evaluating the validity of information given in the text	31	75.5
41	Choosing suitable titles for what has been read	28	74.7
42	Using bibliographies to find suitable subjects or texts for reading	35	71.3
43	Identifying the character of the writer and his/her life	13	70.8
44	Distinguishing between the facts and opinions presented in the text	26	70.1
45	Distinguishing between the ideas that are relevant and irrelevant to the text	23	69.7
46	Distinguishing between postulates and hypotheses	27	64.1

Table 4.5 indicates that none of those competencies was rated not important.

The items listed can be classified into four main categories as follows:

1. A cognitive group comprising:

- a. identification (knowledge): item 43;
- b. distinguishing between letters according to their shapes and sounds: items 12 and 13;
- c. comprehension competency: items 11, 15, 21, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 41, 44 and 46;
- d. application of information to real life: items 18, 19 and 31;
- e. evaluating competency: items 40 and 45.

2. The psychomotor competencies: items 14, 22, 28, 29, 30, 36, 37, 39 and 42.

3. The affective competencies: items 16, 20, 25 and 32.

4. Competencies related to linking the reading aspect with other aspects of language: items 17, 23, 24 and 38.

4.2.3 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Literary Texts

This aspect includes forty-two items, whose statistics, according to Tables 4.6 to 4.8, show that three levels of importance were found, and no items were rated less or not important:

1. Very important: items 1 to 7, with means ranging from 87.7 to 92.4.
2. Important: twenty-eight items, 8 to 35, with means ranging from 63.3 to 87.1.
3. Moderately important: seven items, 36 to 42, with means ranging from 51.8 to 60.9.

4.2.3.1 Very Important

The results given in Table 4.6 show that seven items were rated very important, and they can be divided into two main groups:

1. The recitation of the poetry text: items 1 and 3.
2. Choosing and understanding the text, and acquiring and developing a linguistic repertoire from it: items 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Table 4.6 The Very Important competencies for teaching literary texts

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Applying grammatical rules during the recitation of the poetry text	10	92.4
2	Understanding the meaning of difficult words from the context	12	89.0
3	Intonation of voice during the recitation of the poetry text	9	89.0
4	Deducing the main area of each unit of the text	16	88.8
5	Acquiring a linguistic repertoire of vocabulary, structures and eloquent styles	14	87.9
6	Identifying the general aim of the text	5	87.9
7	Choosing some good literary texts (poetry and prose) from different areas	1	87.7

4.2.3.2 Important

This level was represented by twenty-eight items, as shown in Table 4.7 and they can be summarised according to the steps of teaching as follows:

1. Introducing the text: items 10, 14, 17, 18, 24 and 32.
2. Reading the text: item 4.
3. Discussing and analysing the text: items 8, 13, 15, 22, 25, 27 and 31.
4. Appreciating and criticising the text: items 9, 11, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 28.
5. Linking the literary texts to the other aspects of the Arabic curriculum: item 23.
6. Practising individual activities: items 21, 29, 30 and 34.
7. Competency of general knowledge of writers, poets and history of Arabic literature: items 33 and 35.

Table 4.7 Important competencies for teaching literary texts

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
8	Division of the text into its essential units according to the ideas or thoughts	15	87.1
9	Appreciation of the text by highlighting its noble values.	29	86.6
10	Identifying the occasion that inspired the writing of the text	3	86.2
11	Appreciating the text by analysing its figures of speech	27	85.6
12	Using suitable gestures during the recitation of poetry	11	83.8
13	Observing the extent of the train of thought and associated ideas	19	83.6
14	Identifying the character of the author of the text and his life	2	83.6
15	Using new words from the text to create meaningful sentences	13	83.3
16	Appreciating the text by describing the influence of the figures of speech on its meaning	28	83.0
17	Identifying the genre of the prose text as story, oratory or essay	7	83.0
18	Identifying the influence of the author's environment and era on the writing of the text	4	82.7
19	Appreciating the text by interacting with and responding to the feelings of its author.	30	81.8
20	Identifying the poet's feelings in the text	23	81.5
21	Creating in the pupils a love of literature and a desire to read and memorise many texts	42	79.7
22	Understanding in greater detail the particular meaning of each unit in the text	17	79.4
23	Connecting literary texts to other linguistic aspects	41	79.1
24	Identifying the genre of the poetry text as rhyme or free verse	6	77.9
25	Deducing the character of the author's style as it appears in the text	24	77.8
26	Appreciating the text by awareness of the beauty of both the tone and rhythm in the poem	26	77.0
27	Awareness of the unity of the literary text	18	76.9
28	Criticising the text objectively by evaluating the extent of the author's success in his expression of a particular idea	31	74.9
29	Referring to external literary bibliography to discover more about the author and the text	34	69.5
30	Writing brief details of the author of the text from relevant references	35	69.2
31	Discovering the aspects of innovation in the form and aim of the text	25	68.3
32	Knowing the type of literary school to which the text belongs	8	65.3

33	Knowing the famous writers and poets in Arabic literature throughout history	36	65.1
34	Performing some simple dramas from time to time	40	63.9
35	Having sufficient knowledge of the history of Arabic literature and its main features	39	63.3

4.2.3.3 Moderately Important

The items listed in Table 4.8 were rated moderately important, the third and lowest level of the total. The seven items in the table can be divided into three categories:

1. Criticising the text: items 36 and 37.
2. Knowing the tendencies of modern Arabic literature and its criticism: items 38 and 39.
3. Identifying the type of the metre, (*al-baḥr al-‘arūḍī*), the musical rhyme and the defects of the poem: items 40, 41 and 42.

Table 4.8 Moderately important competencies for teaching literary texts

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
36	Criticising the text objectively by evaluating its good points and comparing it with texts written by the other authors	33	60.9
37	Criticising the text objectively by comparing its style with that of other texts by the same author	32	60.4
38	Knowing the main tendencies of modern Arabic literature	37	59.9
39	Knowing the main tendencies of modern literary criticism	38	56.2
40	Identifying the metre of the poem	20	53.9
41	Identifying the musical rhythm used in the poetry text	21	53.9
42	Identifying the defects from which the rhyme suffers in a given poem	22	51.8

4.2.4 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Oral Composition

The findings of this aspect were divided into two levels: very important and important. The former contained items from 1 to 8, their means running from 87.7 to 91.6. The latter was comprised eighteen items from 9 to 26, their means running

from 72.4 to 87.3. No other levels of importance were found in the results of this aspect.

4.2.4.1 Very Important

Table 4.9 lists the eight items rated as very important.

Table 4.9 Very Important competencies for teaching oral composition

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Using modern standard Arabic when speaking by pronouncing the letters correctly	5	91.6
2	Organising logically the ideas and elements while speaking	8	90.0
3	Identifying the important ideas and elements of the topic	4	89.5
4	Observing conversation etiquette in oral work by respecting the opinions of others	20	89.4
5	Using modern standard Arabic when speaking by using the correct vocabulary and sentences for the intended meaning	7	89.3
6	Using modern standard Arabic while speaking by pronouncing the difficult words correctly	6	88.8
7	Expressing ideas clearly and fluently	13	88.6
8	Talking to others with confidence	17	87.7

The items listed in Table 4.9 can be divided into three categories.

1. Using modern standard Arabic and pronouncing the letters and words correctly; using the correct vocabulary and sentence structure for the intended meaning: items 1, 5 and 6.
2. Identifying, organising and expressing ideas clearly and fluently: items 2, 3, 7 and 8.
3. Conversation etiquette that the speaker should observe: item 4.

4.2.4.2 Important

More than half (eighteen) of the items attained this level and they were very close to the level above (very important), for the highest mean was 87.3.

Table 4.10 Important competencies for teaching oral composition

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
9	Attracting and holding the listeners' attention during the talk with the use of appropriate pauses and continuation according to the meaning intended	9	87.3
10	Motivating pupils towards speaking on various topics	26	87.1
11	Observing conversation etiquette during discussion by using convincing arguments	18	86.8
12	Choosing composition topics that are relevant to the pupils' lives	3	86.7
13	Presenting ideas and opinions with accuracy and sincerity	15	86.1
14	Giving all pupils a chance to participate in discussion	25	85.0
15	Attracting and holding the listeners' attention during the speech by keeping to the point	12	85.0
16	Covering the points with all their aspects of the topic of the speech	14	84.4
17	Making use of other linguistic aspects for choosing a suitable topic for a speech	1	84.1
18	Observing conversation etiquette during the speech by replying politely to the enquiries and criticisms of others	19	82.7
19	Summarising the main ideas and points of the topic at the end of the speech	21	82.4
20	Referring to various sources and bibliography to develop a linguistic repertoire to help pupils in oral composition	24	81.6
21	Attracting and holding the listeners' attention during the talk by using expressive movements and gestures	11	79.4
22	Attracting and holding the listeners' attention during the talk by appropriate use of summary and elaboration	10	78.0
23	Making use of other subjects in choosing a suitable topic for a speech	2	77.8
24	Criticising the ideas and opinions of others objectively	16	76.9
25	Directing and participating in symposia, meetings and discussions to develop pupils' oral composition	23	73.3
26	Distinguishing between the characteristic and styles of the different types of oral composition such as oratory and discussion	22	72.4

According to Table 4.10 the items can be categorised as follows:

1. Attracting and holding the listeners' attention in different ways: items 9, 13, 15, 19, 21 and 22.

2. Observing conversation etiquette during the speech by practising polite and objective behaviour: items 11, 18 and 24.
3. Comprehensiveness of the speech in its main ideas: item 16.
4. Knowing the styles of the different types of oral composition: item 26.
5. Linking oral composition to other linguistic aspects, subjects and real-life situations to develop the required competencies of speech: items 12, 17, 20, 23 and 25.
6. Competencies related to the teacher's performance: items 10 and 14.

4.2.5 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Written Composition

Tables 4.11 to 4.13 rate the findings of this aspect at three levels, and no items in this aspect were rated less or not important:

1. Very Important: items 1 to 12, with means ranging from 87.7 to 91.2.
2. Important: fourteen items from 13 to 26, with means ranging 72.8 to 87.4.
3. Moderately Important: item 27, with a mean of 61.3.

4.2.5.1 Very Important

According to the statistics in Table 4.11, all twelve items were rated very important. This suggests that particular attention should be given to these items in the teaching of written composition. According to the table, the items can be divided into three groups:

1. The organisation, variety, clarity and sequence of ideas: items 1, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

2. Acquisition of a style to enable pupils to present an original and cohesive piece of writing: items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. (Most of these items were closely related to one another, which could indicate the credibility of the findings of this study.)
3. Practice in writing about a variety of topics: items 8 and 12.

Table 4.11 Very Important competencies for teaching written composition

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Organising ideas logically when writing	11	91.2
2	Applying dictation rules when writing	6	90.3
3	Planning the subject by dividing it into introduction, presentation and conclusion when writing	4	90.1
4	Bearing accuracy in mind when writing	19	89.7
5	Appropriate use of quotations	18	89.7
6	Correcting the linguistic errors made in writing	23	89.7
7	Bearing in mind the clarity of ideas	13	89.3
8	Choosing subjects that represent various aspects of written composition such as letters, essays, reports and creative writing	1	88.8
9	Bearing in mind the variety of basic ideas of the topic	12	88.5
10	Choosing the correct vocabulary and sentence structure for the intended meaning	8	88.3
11	Placing sentences in logical succession	5	87.8
12	Motivating pupils to writing on various topics	27	87.7

4.2.5.2 Important

Table 4.12 shows that fourteen items were rated important, which suggests that they play a significant role in written composition. They can be divided into three groups as follows:

1. Making use of the link between written composition and other linguistic aspects: items 14, 16, 17 and 25.
2. Pointers to a suitable style for the correct presentation of ideas and opinions in writing: items 15, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 26.
3. Correction and evaluation of writing: items 13, 18, 19 and 21.

Table 4.12 Important competencies for teaching written composition

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
13	Identifying the type of linguistic errors that are made	22	87.4
14	Correct use of punctuation when writing	7	87.2
15	Organising the written text into sentences and paragraphs	9	87.0
16	Making use of other linguistic aspects in written composition	3	87.0
17	Practising both functional and creative writing	21	86.4
18	Evaluating pupils' ideas, subject matter and methods or styles of writing	25	86.2
19	Observing objective standards for correcting and judging the quality of each type of written composition	24	85.7
20	Presenting the appropriate evidence to support the pupils' ideas or opinions in their writing	16	84.3
21	Preparing various linguistic activities to solve the problem of common linguistic errors	26	83.7
22	Presenting opinions logically and effectively	15	82.7
23	Criticising the ideas or opinions of others objectively	17	78.9
24	Correct positioning of main and sub-titles when writing	10	76.8
25	Referring to various sources and bibliography for writing about the topic of composition	2	76.3
26	Including footnotes where necessary when writing	14	72.8

4.2.5.3 Moderately Important

Although the remaining item, as shown in Table 4.13, was not rated important or very important, it still had some significance, for its mean was 61.3.

Table 4.13 Moderately Important competency for teaching written composition

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
27	Acquiring the habit of writing quickly	20	61.3

4.2.6 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Grammar

Unlike the previous linguistic aspects, most items (fourteen out of the total of nineteen or 73.7 per cent) were rated very important. The remaining five items (15 to 19) were rated important. In the view of the respondents to the questionnaire,

many pupils apparently find grammar a very difficult subject, which means that various competencies need to be learned to master grammatical rules. No items in this aspect were rated at the lower levels of importance.

4.2.6.1 Very Important

According to Table 4.14, fourteen items were rated very important, with means ranging from 87.5 to 94.6.

Table 4.14 Very Important competencies for teaching grammar

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Using the inflection (<i>al-i'rāb</i>) correctly when reading and writing	8	94.6
2	Deducing the grammatical or morphological rule from the various examples being studied	6	93.8
3	Mastering the inflection (<i>al-i'rāb</i>) by the correct analysis of words and sentences	7	93.7
4	Deducing from the text the examples demonstrating the rule being studied	3	92.9
5	Creating meaningful sentences to practise the rules being studied	9	91.4
6	Logical presentation by the teacher of grammatical and morphological concepts at a suitable level for pupils	18	91.0
7	The use of correct pronunciation and sentence structure by pupils when practising linguistic rules in writing and speech	11	90.4
8	Discovering the grammatical and morphological errors that are made	12	90.3
9	Correcting the grammatical and morphological errors that are found	13	90.1
10	Motivating pupils to studying grammar and morphology	19	89.6
11	Using the linguistic rules in the other school subjects	15	88.9
12	Knowing the morphological rules of the structure or form of words	10	88.6
13	Choosing texts containing sufficient examples of the rules being studied	1	87.9
14	Using the grammatical and morphological rules for understanding the new lessons of linguistic rules	14	87.5

The findings presented in Table 4.14 can be classified as follows:

1. Identifying the texts containing relevant examples and using these examples for knowing the linguistic rules: items 2, 4, 12 and 13.
2. Discussing and analysing the concepts: item 6.
3. Application of linguistic rules to other aspects and school subjects: items 1, 3, 5, 7, 11 and 14.
4. Discovering and correcting errors: items 8 and 9.
5. Motivating pupils to study linguistic rules: item 10.

4.2.6.2 Important

This level contains five items as shown in Table 4.15 and they can be grouped as follows:

1. Understanding the meaning of the text: item 17.
2. Analysing the examples: items 16 and 18.
3. Application of the rules: items 15 and 19.

Table 4.15 Important Competencies of teaching linguistic grammar

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
15	Practising various linguistic activities to correct the common linguistic errors	17	83.2
16	Understanding the connection between the examples by relating their elements to one another	4	82.4
17	Understanding the general meaning of the text	2	81.8
18	Identifying the similarities and differences of the examples	5	81.5
19	Making use of various sources and bibliography for compiling extra grammatical and morphological exercises	16	79.6

4.2.7 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Dictation and Punctuation

Since dictation is very important in training pupils to produce precise and correct writing, the analysis of the data shows that most of the items (1 to 15) in this aspect of teaching were classified as very important competencies. The remaining six items (16 to 21) were rated important. Tables 4.16 and 4.17 classify the items according to their importance.

4.2.7.1 Very Important

As stated above, this level contained fifteen items, with means ranging from 88.9 to 92.8 as shown in Table 4.16. The items can be divided into four groups as follows:

1. Knowing the basic rules of dictation and punctuation: items 1, 2, 5 and 7.
2. Recognition of differences between shapes and sounds of letters and words: items 4, 10 and 11.
3. Application of the knowledge of the rules of dictation and punctuation: items 3, 8, 9 and 15.
4. Overcoming the difficulties of writing the Arabic alphabet and correcting the errors: items 6, 12, 13 and 14.

Table 4.16 Very Important competencies for teaching dictation and punctuation

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Knowing the basic rules of dictation so as to write the letters and words correctly	5	92.8
2	Pronouncing letters and words correctly	4	92.7
3	Writing sentences correctly according to the dictation rules	8	92.2
4	Distinguishing between shapes of letters, especially those which have a similar outline	1	92.2
5	Knowing the types of punctuation signs	11	91.7

6	Overcoming the difficulties of writing the Arabic alphabet, particularly those concerning <i>ḥamza</i> , soft alif (<i>al-alif al-layyina</i>), open and tied <i>tā'</i> (<i>al-tā' al-maftūḥa</i> and <i>al-marbūṭa</i>)	6	91.2
7	Knowing the correct placing of punctuation in writing	12	91.1
8	Bearing accuracy in mind when writing	9	91.1
9	Mastering the correct use of punctuation when reading and writing	13	90.9
10	Distinguishing between the sounds of letters, especially those which are similar in articulation	3	90.0
11	Listening carefully to the correct pronunciation of letters and words	2	90.0
12	Overcoming the problems of writing non-phonetic words, such as alif in <i>hādha</i> (this)	7	89.6
13	Following the approved method for correcting errors in dictation	16	89.4
14	Finding the errors made in dictation	15	89.1
15	Applying the rules of dictation to the pupils' daily writing	18	88.9

4.2.7.2 Important

This level of importance comprises six items related to two points as shown in Table 4.17:

1. Mastering the writing of text quickly and without errors: items 17, 18, 19 and 21.
2. Competencies that the teacher should possess and apply: items 16 and 20.

Table 4.17 Important competencies for teaching dictation and punctuation

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
16	Motivating pupils to study and practise dictation rules	20	87.4
17	Connecting dictation with other aspects of language	17	84.9
18	Practising several linguistic activities to cure the common errors of dictation	19	83.0
19	Writing to the dictation of a full text or topic without any errors	14	82.2
20	Knowledge and application by the teacher of the new decisions on easing the rules of dictation, which are issued regularly by linguistic academies (<i>al-majāmi' al-lughawiyya</i>)	21	78.9
21	Acquiring the habit of writing quickly	10	68.0

4.2.8 Classification of Competencies for Teaching Arabic Calligraphy

This aspect consisted of 22 items, twelve of which were rated very important and the remaining ten important. The findings are shown in Tables 4.18 and 4.19.

4.2.8.1 Very Important

The means at this level ranged from 87.6 to 93.5, as shown in Table 4.18. The items in the table focus on three points:

1. Competencies that pupils should apply when practising calligraphy:
 - a. The correct way of drawing or writing letters: items 1, 3 and 5.
 - b. The production of good examples of Arabic script: items 7 and 10.
 - c. Bearing in mind the characteristics of calligraphy: items 2, 4, 8 and 9.
2. Discovering and correcting errors: items 6 and 12.
3. Developing the inclination of pupils to practise Arabic calligraphy: item 11.

Table 4.18 Very Important competencies for teaching Arabic calligraphy

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
1	Distinguishing between the shapes of letters, especially those which have a similar outline	1	93.5
2	Following the line for writing letters and words when practising calligraphy	3	93.2
3	Knowing how to write letters correctly according to their position in the word	2	92.8
4	Bearing in mind the clarity of calligraphy	12	91.4
5	Mastering the writing of letters when they are written separately or joined	4	89.8
6	Correcting any errors in writing letters and words	18	89.2
7	Following the example of writing provided so as to master its accomplishment	11	89.2
8	Concentrating carefully when practising calligraphy	14	88.8
9	Bearing in mind the harmony and co-ordination of calligraphy	13	88.5

10	Mastering two famous types of Arabic calligraphy: <i>Naskh</i> and <i>Ruq'a</i>	9	88.3
11	Developing pupils' inclination to practise Arabic calligraphy	22	87.6
12	Discovering any errors in drawing the letters and words when practising calligraphy	17	87.6

4.2.8.2 Important

Ten items (13 to 22) were rated important competencies at this level, with their means ranging from 77.5 to 86.0. Table 4.19 shows the order of these items, which can be divided into three groups as follows:

1. Cognitive aspect: items 16 and 22.
2. Psychomotor aspect: items 13, 14, 15, 17, 19 and 20.
3. Affective aspect (the appreciation of the beauty of Arabic calligraphy): items 18 and 21.

Table 4.19 Important competencies for teaching Arabic calligraphy

New order	Item	Original order	Mean
13	Mastering the correct writing of words	6	86.0
14	Developing the artistic talents of pupils practising Arabic calligraphy	21	85.3
15	Achieving a balance between speed and the mastery of Arabic calligraphy competencies	7	85.0
16	Understanding the good example of writing that pupils should follow when practising calligraphy	10	84.4
17	Bearing in mind the letters that go below line such as <i>jīm</i> and <i>mīm</i>	5	83.8
18	Discovering and appreciating the beauty of Arabic calligraphy	15	83.7
19	Practising several linguistic activities to correct common errors in calligraphy	19	81.7
20	Practising calligraphy in other linguistic aspects and other subjects	20	79.4
21	Appreciating the beauty of Arabic calligraphy	16	78.8
22	Knowing the different types of Arabic calligraphy	8	77.5

4.3 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter has been to present the statistical analysis of the findings obtained from the questionnaire at identifying the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the preparatory schools in Oman. The results led the researcher to conclude that the majority of items in all aspects were rated important and very important. In contrast, only nine items out of the total of two hundred and thirty-one in the questionnaire were rated moderately important. These items were related to the following competencies: Teaching Listening (one); Teaching Literary Texts (seven); and Written Composition (one). The findings also showed that there were no items rated less important and not important, since the lowest mean recorded was 51.8 which was related to aspect of Literary Texts. The value of this mean was rated moderately important because, as described in section 4.1 of this chapter, it fell between 37.5 and 62.5.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

The primary purpose of Chapter Five is to discuss the statistics obtained from the answers to the questionnaire, which were given in Chapter Four. The discussion and interpretation below are supported by the relevant literature.

Regarding the statistical analysis presented in Chapter Four, it should be noted here that the results need to be read in the light of their classification into three levels: (1) Very Important and Important, which are combined; (2) Moderately Important, which is a group by itself; and (3) Not Important and Not at all Important, which are also combined. The reason for dividing the results into these three levels is that when respondents choose Very Important, they logically mean also Important, and when they choose Not at all Important, they mean also Not Important. According to this classification, no competencies were rated at the third level of importance.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic at the intermediate schools in Oman and to arrange these competencies in order of their importance. To this end, the discussion and interpretation will focus on the competencies rated Very Important, the value of whose means was 87.5 or more as stated in Chapter Four, section 4.1, since they were identified as the most important items. The discussion of competencies rated Moderately Important, the value of whose means ranging from 37.5 to less than 62.5, were also presented in the present chapter, since they were perceived as the least

important items according to the tables in Chapter Four. The following sections then discuss the findings relating to the eight linguistic aspects of teaching Arabic by following the classification of competencies into each level of importance as described at the beginning of Chapter Four.

5.1 Findings Related to Teaching Listening

5.1.1 Very Important Competencies

According to Table 4.1 in Chapter Four, six competencies were rated Very Important since the values of their means were between 96.6 and 88.1. They were classified into two groups according to their topic.

The first group deals with the etiquette of listening, which listeners are required to follow: items 1, 2 and 4. These competencies were rated Very Importance in the opinion of experts, inspectors and teachers of Arabic. The importance of these competencies is due to their significant role in the task of teaching listening, since success in other competencies of listening is dependent on them.

The importance of the above competencies for successful listening is supported by the relevant literature. In this context, “paying attention”, for example, as part of the etiquette of listening, is essential to distinguish between hearing and listening. Hearing, as shown by Rixon (1986: 28), is simply the recognition of sounds, whereas listening implies conscious attention to the message of what is said. Mersand (1977: 130–131) also lists some necessary strategies that the listener should follow in order to listen accurately, completely, discriminatively and appreciatively as follows: (1) sitting in a comfortable position with one’s eyes on the

speaker; (2) showing by one's facial expression that one is following the speaker; (3) being patient if the speaker is in difficulties; (4) not interrupting the speaker, even if the final bell rings; and (5) listening to others as one would like them to listen to oneself. Furthermore, Mersand (p.137) points out that "good conversation must have as its counterpart courteous listening. Students always should keep in mind that the good listener is frequently the socially acceptable and frequently the honoured and respectable." In addition, a good listener is one who does not need to interrupt the speaker with frequent requests for clarification or repetition to refresh his short-term memory (Aitken, 1979: 176).

The way in which pupils can show that they are following the speaker's words, as Dunkel (1986: 103–104) states, is by making physical responses to the listening experience. These responses indicate at the same time understanding of the speech and attention to the speaker. This is because, as Rixon, (1986: 121) says, we can "investigate a learner's writing or speaking difficulties to some extent, and observe how he reads, but what goes on inside each listener's head is more of a mystery." This point is also supported by Wheeldon (1981: 57), who states that it is impossible for the teacher to evaluate listening, since it is an activity that is taking place internally – in the pupil's mind. This is because, he adds on the same page, the "teacher has no idea of what is being processed by the learner, of what is being understood or of what has been missed."

The above discussion proves, then, that physical response is necessary to show the competency of following the speaker. In this regard, Powers (1986: 14), in his research *Academic Demands Related to Listening Skills*, has found that

“following lectures given with different speeds and accents or dialects” is one of the items seen as a difficult activity, which pupils discounted while listening. Perhaps that is why the competency was rated Very Important in the findings of the current study, which suggests that if we are serious about teaching listening, we should consider this and other items as a way to successful listening.

M‘A¹ in its workshop (1999: 1) points out that the listener should have a full knowledge of the subject to which he is listening, and this requires two conditions: paying attention and careful listening, both of which are essential to achieve the purpose of listening. Full knowledge of the subject of the speech means that the listener should not ignore the speaker for even a moment during the speech. The same reference (p. 4) lists the characteristics of the good listener. Among them is letting the speaker feel that the listener is with him from beginning to end and that he is following him with his eyes, ears and brain. The M‘A also mentions (p. 33) examples of obstacles to good listening, some of which are created by the teacher, such as: (1) interrupting the pupil while the class is listening to him; and (2) neglecting to teach the pupils how to listen carefully and pay attention. To conclude, it should be said that since the listener in real life cannot switch off the speaker, paying attention and following the speaker’s words are very important.

The second group rated Very Important, as shown in Table 4.1, consists of the remaining three items (3, 5 and 6), which focus on gathering, organizing and summarizing the ideas of the speech. The fact that these competencies were perceived as Very Important items suggests that most of the respondents to the

¹ M‘A refers to *al-Markaz al-‘Arabī li al-Buhūth al-Tarbawīyya li Duwal al-khalīj*.

questionnaire agree that more time should be devoted to these competencies when teaching listening.

In view of these findings, the reasons for assessing this group of competencies to be Very Important need to be specified. Gathering the main idea of the speech, for example, has a primary role in teaching listening. Mersand (1977: 128) states that pupils nowadays listen much more than they read as a means of obtaining information, facts, opinions, ideas and attitudes. In a similar vein, Joiner (1986: 44) points out that we must prepare ourselves in today's society to receive important information from the media such as radio and television rather than from the printed page.

To enable pupils to identify the main ideas, which usually contain the important information, they must learn to distinguish them from other information that may be given in a speech. Unfortunately, as Yates (1979: 16, 40) points out, it is not always easy to identify the main ideas. Often there are no cues introducing them and the speech may include relevant details, which provide explanation, illustration or supporting evidence, as well as irrelevant details, which add nothing to the meaning. Another type of supplementary information that the listener is likely to come across is the digression, which, although not essential to the main idea, is used for further illustration and clarification. This may make it more difficult for the listener, who must remember the main ideas while listening to the digression to avoid possible confusion when the speaker finally returns to the original statement (ibid.: 27).

These facts are supported by Rubin (1982: 19, 30), whose research has produced the findings that 33 per cent of students at college level cannot or do not listen attentively enough to identify and organize the main ideas when listening to a speech. This suggests that there is a strong relationship between gathering the main ideas and organizing them. This leads to the next stage, that is, the ability to summarize in a good oral style what has been heard, thus indicating the integration of listening and oral composition. This can be practised by the pupil extracting the main ideas from the speech and repeating the information aloud as a summary in his own words.

The integration of listening and oral composition can be supported by the following statement. Since the ability to listen for a certain kind of information and apply it to any situation is an important competency which can be learned and practised (Otto, 1979: 319), teaching listening is clearly essential for the improvement of oral composition. For example, it is obvious, as Mersand (1977: 126, 138) states, that a child learns his mother tongue by listening, which means that teachers of speaking have to be aware of the importance of good listening in building better speech habits. This integration is confirmed by Pittman (1967: 147), who describes one of the principal methods of teaching languages. This is the aural–oral method, applicable to the ears and mouth respectively. This means, as Pittman adds on the same page, that we teach through and by the recognition and use of speech, which leads to the following facts: “(1) speech is of the first importance in the skills of language and language learning; (2) hearing the language correctly and speaking it correctly are of equal importance.”

To sum up, it can be concluded from the above discussion that listening has finally taken its rightful place as an end in itself in the teaching of language. Teachers of Arabic can help and enable their pupils to apply and practise competencies of listening, as described above and rated Very Important, in real life.

5.1.2 Moderately Important Competencies

One item only, as shown in Table 4.3, was rated at this level: “prediction of what will be said in speech”. It received the lowest mean, that is, 57.5. Although this is a negative result, since it indicates that this item plays a lesser role in teaching listening, that does not necessarily mean that it is not required for teaching listening.

It seems to the writer that the reasons for rating the above item as Least Important are as follows. There is the assumption that teachers do not give this competency any attention; indeed, they ignore it completely when teaching listening. Perhaps that is because respondents think that the competencies rated Very Important, as discussed in section 5.1.1, are enough for pupils at the intermediate stage since the competency of prediction needs a high level of thinking.

Nevertheless, a review of the literature highlights the importance of prediction in teaching listening. Rixon (1986: 65, 68), for example, points out:

It can be very useful to get students to predict what they will hear. This helps them to recognize the actual words used in the passage. It is also useful to ask them to predict some of the content of what they will hear. This gives a wider conceptual framework against which they can match what they hear, and can lead to surprise and indignation, as when a listener expects a speaker to take a particular line of argument and he says quite the opposite. It is also helps students to draw inferences from what they hear. If a piece of information

which they expect to find in a passage is not there in so many words, they might start looking for ways in which the speaker might have implied it.

Madkūr (1991: 87, 94) also indicates the importance of this competency, which he calls deductive thinking (*al-tafkīr al-istintāji*). He states that among the main features of a good listener is deductive thinking, which means prediction and clear expectation. Examples are predicting the end of a story or the results of many events that have been described.

From the above discussion, it could be said that although the competency of prediction was rated the Least Important, it has, on the contrary, an important place and influence in the development of the other listening competencies.

The second reason is perhaps that most teachers are lacking in knowledge of the competencies required for teaching listening and they have difficulty in deciding which are very important and which are least important. This may be because there are no lists of these competencies available in the field of teaching Arabic in Oman. As stated in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3A, this may result in ignorance of teaching listening since it has not been allocated any class periods or even a slot in the Arabic curriculum. Such ignorance is also perhaps due to the fact that the majority of teachers are unfamiliar with the leading educational research journals since schools do not give much attention to research activities. From my experience in teaching, teachers did not do anything related to research or even attend any seminars to discuss educational topics. Nor did I come across any well-known periodicals except a few old copies which the Ministry of Education had distributed to the schools instead of putting them in its main store.

A review of the findings related to listening teaching discussed in this section produces the following conclusions: (1) listening plays a central role in the lives of people in social interaction, and in career success. It is also particularly important in the lives of pupils at all educational levels; (2) knowledge of the competencies of listening can enable pupils to define proper strategies for performing effectively as listeners; (3) listening is directly related to other aspects of teaching Arabic such as oral composition; (4) since teaching listening has been given a low priority in the Arabic curriculum, teachers do not know its basic competencies, which means that they cannot teach their pupils to master them; and (5) since we believe that listening is a very important aspect of teaching Arabic, we think that there are valid reasons for introducing it at the intermediate stage and devoting adequate time to teaching it.

5.2 Findings Related to Teaching Reading

As shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, there are 46 items included in this aspect. Of that number, 10 items were rated Very Important, with the remainder rated Important. This means that no items were rated Moderately, Less and Not Important. Therefore, the focus here will be on the Very Important competencies, the value of whose means ranged from 94.3 to 87.6. This result shows that there is a remarkably close agreement between respondents about the central role of these items in teaching reading.

5.2.1 Very Important Competencies

As stated in Chapter Four (section 4.2.2.1), the competencies related to this level can be divided into five categories. In the following paragraphs, we shall explain the reasons for rating these items Very Important.

The first category contains four competencies related to reading aloud: items 1, 3, 4 and 7. It should be noted that there is a strong relationship between these four items. This is because the correct pronunciation of the letters of the alphabet results in reading aloud without errors. Consequently, the reader is pleased with his achievement, which in turn prompts him to read with confidence and fluency, while at the same time he can use intonation and suitable gestures to express the desired meaning.

A review of the relevant literature supports the opinions expressed above, and confirms the importance of these competencies. The significant role of reading aloud (oral reading) is highlighted by Dechant and Smith (1977: 203), who state that oral reading is an avenue to learning. Pupils can benefit educationally by reading prose, poetry or drama aloud, for example. It is also helpful in testing fluency and accuracy in reading. Furthermore, Baron and Strawson (1976: 386) and Williams (1986: 2) state that reading aloud is a better way of practising pronunciation and it provides teachers with a means of evaluating progress in reading. Al-Sayyid (1988: 333), in his description of reading aloud, states that it is a type of reading which is performed orally, the letters and words are pronounced and the style of reading can be changed according to the situation.

It could be said, therefore, that many native speakers of a language, as stated by Lado (1964: 137), cannot read aloud effectively because they have not mastered this skill. To remedy the situation, in my opinion, far more attention should be given to practising the correct pronunciation of the letters. The fact that some letters in Arabic have a similar sound might cause pupils to make errors in their pronunciation.

According to al-Mubārak (1964: 249–251), examples are *sīn* (س) and *ṣād* (ص); *tā'* (ت) and *ṭā'*; (ط) *zād* (ظ) and *dhāl* (ذ). Therefore it is essential that the teacher sets a good example in his pronunciation so as to enable the pupils to avoid such confusion. He can also use sound recordings and a language laboratory for this purpose.

In my view, there are also other factors which can cause confusion in pronunciation in Oman: (1) the influence of the accent used by both teachers and pupils. In this regard, Munby (1978: 84) and Tench (1981: 11) point out that the largest dimension and the most obvious factor of dialectal language variety is geographical or regional dialect and this affects all participants. They add that the language variation according to region is most marked in the speaker's pronunciation, which is an aspect of dialect known as accent. There are several regional accents in Oman. For example, people in the Interior Region pronounce the letter *qāf* as *kāf*, so when they say the word *qāl* (say), it sounds like *kāl*. In the east of Oman, people pronounce the letter *qāf* as *ghayn*, so when they say the word *qāl* (say), it sounds like *ghāl*; (2) as stated in Chapter Three, section 3.1, there are many teachers of Arabic from various Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan and Tunisia. Each group of these teachers has a different accent. This fact is supported by Mitchell (1993: 4), who says:

Geographical distribution by *region* is the most important factor of contemporary difference in Arabic speech, so that it is necessary to distinguish, for example, among Arabian, Jordanian, Iraqi, Libyan, Moroccan, Syrian, and many other similar regional varieties used by the 130,000,000 or more speakers of this truly world language.

Dechant and Smith (1977: 203) comment on the use of intonation and

gestures as follows: “The intonation pattern cannot be fully represented by writing. The tone of voice (the paralanguage) and the gestured bodily movements (the kinesics) are only crudely represented by underlined words, exclamation points, or word choice (sauntered, gesticulated).”

The second category includes only one item (10): “not uttering or pronouncing words when reading silently”. Clearly, this item is related to silent reading. Pittman (1967: 178) points out that silent reading is receiving much attention since it is a valuable activity in education directed at understanding what we read. The features of silent reading are described by Dechant and Smith (1977: 203): “silent reading is considered to be a ‘see and comprehend process’ rather than a ‘see, say, and comprehend process’.” This suggests that vocalization or even sub-vocalization is avoided during silent reading. Qūra (1981: 127) also determines the nature of silent reading by describing it as the process by which is achieved the explanation and interpreting of the written symbols, and the comprehension of their meanings in the brain of the reader without any voice or muttering or the moving of lips.

Therefore, to read silently means that the words should not be uttered, since that activity is the basis of oral reading. Silent reading is practised by most people in everyday life in different situations (Nuttall, 1983: 3). As a result, pupils need to master its competencies at an early stage (Madkūr: 1991: 141).

The third category is related to understanding the words and ideas of the text: items 5 and 6. These competencies are closely linked to each other. To understand the main ideas, the pupils must have knowledge of word meanings and be able to

select the correct meaning from the context. After all, the purpose of all reading is to understand the meaning. Dechant and Smith (1977: 254) state that the ability to identify the main idea is necessary for the interpretation and understanding of what is written. Since all the other interpretative reading competencies are secondary, pupils cannot identify the theme of a paragraph or understand the implied meanings or organize or summarize what they have read if they cannot grasp the main idea. Expanding one's knowledge of the meanings of unfamiliar words is also essential to this end. One way of discovering the meanings of these words is from the context. According to Southgate (1984: 7), pupils could follow the clues provided by the passage itself such as semantic cues. Therefore, the teacher should encourage the pupil to guess the meaning of the word from the context of the sentence and paragraph that he is reading.

The fourth category deals with item number 8 "choosing the reading texts that suit the level of the pupils and are useful to them". This competency suggests that it is very important to encourage pupils to participate in choosing texts that are suitable for them. In this regard, Rammuny (1994: 228) found that the learners' participation in choosing topics related to the learning strategies to be incorporated into the lessons helps to create a teaching/learning curriculum suitable for all learners. Johnson (1973: 19) also states that by motivation "people, and most certainly children, learn that which interests them much more readily than that which does not. It is therefore evident that we must pay careful attention to the content of the reading material when we look at reading programmes."

Obviously, in every class there are pupils who have a different level of reading ability. Therefore, each pupil needs special guidance in choosing and reading texts according to his level. To achieve this task, the teacher should, for example, make a preliminary survey of what is available in the school library and which books would interest his pupils. It is also essential that the teacher knows that these books can be read without too much difficulty.

Although the findings of the present study emphasize the importance of this competency, the current situation of teaching reading in Oman shows that pupils are not encouraged to look at a variety of suitable books from which to make a choice for reading. This situation could be due to several reasons. (1) The system of instruction is based on a compulsory textbook, which is also the only basis of the final exam in this subject taken by all the pupils. This means that the teacher must finish it before the end of the academic year. As a result, there is simply not enough time for the teachers to do everything that they would like to do with their pupils such as further reading from various sources. (2) The pupils themselves lack the inclination to read about a subject from different sources. This is because (3) schools libraries suffer from a lack of reference material and in most regions there is no local library to supply this deficiency.

The fifth category of the Reading competency, as shown in Table 4.4, comprises two items: 2 and 9. The original order of these items in the table was 40 and 41 and both deal with important issues related to teaching reading: linguistic errors and diagnostic knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Evidence

supporting the importance of this aspect is provided by several writers. Pittman (1967: 17) says:

The value of correct language habits at the elementary level should be understood. This is the foundation of our pupils' skill for all later levels. Incorrect and bad language habits learned in the first few months or years will produce habitual errors. Habitual errors acquired at the elementary stage will endanger all language habits, even those learnt much later. In the presence of habitual errors, the secondary and tertiary teacher is faced with special difficulties: his teaching is expected to remedy the unhappy situation of his pupils, which was created at the elementary stage.

So that the teacher can plan adequate and appropriate instruction for every pupil, Southgate (1984: 8–9) points out that one of the requisite competencies for reading is that the teacher should have a continuing detailed knowledge of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. He also needs to know and use a variety of individual assessment techniques.

From the above discussion can be drawn the following conclusions. Since reading is an essential aspect of language and the gateway to success in other areas of the school curriculum, an effective teacher of the subject should recognize the importance of the above competencies. It is clear that teachers need not only a good knowledge of reading but also the ability to apply that knowledge in the classroom. Furthermore, it should be mentioned here that the findings presented in this section are supported by many researchers who have perceived these competencies as the most important for an Arabic teacher. Among them are Bādī (1990: 58–72) and al-Kandarī (1999: 199–202).

5.3 Findings Related to Teaching Literary Texts

In Chapter Four, section 4.2.3, the competencies related to the aspect of literary texts were classified into three levels of importance: Very Important (7 items), Important (28 items), and Moderately Important (7 items). For the purpose of Chapter Five, we shall discuss the competencies that were perceived as most and least important.

5.3.1 Very Important Competencies

According to Table 4.6, the seven items related to this level of importance were divided into two categories. One was mastering the competency of the recitation (reading aloud) of poetry by applying grammatical rules and using the intonation of the voice: items 1 and 3. The importance of this type of reading derives from the significance of poetry as an aspect of literature, which is explained below.

It has been well known for a long time that Arabic poetry, in the words of Bakalla (1981: 117), has always been recognized as the *ḍiḥn al-‘arab*, the public record of the Arabs. This is because it is “a resort in times of sorrow and happiness, of defeat and victory, an expression of the Arab people’s cultural ideals and greatest aspirations” (Allen, 1998: 104). Similarly, Suleiman (1993: 77) points out that “Arabic poetry reflects, as it has done throughout the ages, the values of the Arab people and their current concerns.”

Consequently, there are good reasons for identifying the primary aims of teaching poetry to pupils, especially when we know that “the Arab word for literature is *Adab*, which originally meant good manners and behaviour” (Bakalla, 1981: 113). According to Gurrey (1959: 127), these aims can be summarized as follows: (1) helping pupils to enjoy poetry; (2) helping them to discover more in each poem than

they could discover by themselves; and (3) encouraging them to continue reading poetry so that in time they will be capable of understanding and later of appreciating the great poems.

Clearly, reciting poetry is one of the main purposes of teaching this subject to pupils. Dechant and Smith (1977: 203) emphasize the point by saying that one of many purposes of reading aloud is that pupils can use this method for prose, poetry or drama. In addition, one way of reading poetry is in a group, which results in a better appreciation of literature as well as improvements in pronunciation, phrasing, interpretation, rhythm and flexibility. It also develops an awareness of the intonation pattern and provides practice in grammatical usage (ibid.: 205). On the use of grammar in reading Arabic poetry, al-Hashmi (2001: 25) points out that “the readers need to be aware of the grammatical rules in order to put the right vowel at the end of each word if necessary.” Therefore, to enable pupils to recite poetry effectively, Gurrey (1959: 130) states that they must learn to read with vocal clarity and articulation, and with full control of the deeper breathing necessary to transform print into sound for an audience. Pupils also need to learn how to read with vocal flexibility and intonation to express the meanings and emotions of the poem.

The above discussion supports the findings that the previous competencies indicate the relationship between literature and other aspects of the Arabic language such as grammar and reading. This result, in fact, enhances what has already been discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.1, about the integration of all linguistic aspects during teaching.

The second category of competencies rated Very Important comprised the remaining five items: 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7. According to a survey of these competencies, they deal with the following three issues: (1) identifying the aim and ideas of the text; (2) developing the linguistic repertoire of the pupils; and (3) choosing suitable texts.

According to the respondents to the questionnaire, particularly the group of teachers, it was believed that pupils should be given the opportunity to use their initiative in extracting the general aim and the main ideas of the text. The teachers themselves had been denied this opportunity, perhaps because many of them had been affected by the traditional methods of teaching literature, which emphasize the role of the teacher in explaining everything in the text to his pupils, who only listen and try to understand what is being taught to them. Many writers have described this method as the one which is followed in teaching literary texts. Among them, for example, is Shaḥāta (1992: 183), who has written about the current situation and the difficulties facing the teaching of this aspect of Arabic.

The competencies that focus on developing a linguistic repertoire have been said to play an essential role in promoting the pupils' language. This can be achieved by encouraging pupils to read literary texts as much as possible. Al-Hashmi (2001: 26–27) emphasizes that since the speciality of literature lies in its unique use of language, one of its roles is to provide pupils with a variety of vocabulary and structures to use in their own style to express themselves. This suggests that in the literature lesson “pupils should come across new vocabulary and groups of words and add them to their lexicon” (ibid.: 22).

The use of literature to enrich the pupils' language certainly leads to the last competency, number 7: "choosing text that is suitable for the level of the pupils". However, the need to acquire new vocabulary could persuade some educationists to select texts according to their lexical difficulty. This is the traditional method of selecting literary texts in the Arab world, which is described, for instance, by Madkūr (1991: 209–210). He writes that there are several defects in this method as follows: (1) too many texts are selected which include numerous difficult words and unusual structures; (2) the texts cover topics that do not inspire feelings and emotions; and (3) the texts are remote from and irrelevant to the environment, experience and interests of the pupils. The last defect was also emphasized by a schoolgirl on an Omani television channel on 7 April 2002 during an educational programme called *Marāyā Tarbawīyya*.² She stated that the Omani curriculum of teaching literary texts did not reflect the pupils' interest, nor was there any participation by the pupils in the planning and choice of texts for studying.

This situation, in contrast, suggests that what is offered to pupils must not only suit their linguistic capacities but should also be within their general experience. This is necessary because, as Lazar (1993: 15) states, if the texts are carefully chosen, pupils will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives. If such a policy is followed, it will help to develop the pupils' love of literature and a desire to seek more information about it. Therefore, the important role of the literary texts means that their careful selection should be given due attention in the Arabic curriculum.

² This programme is a discussion of educational issues in Oman with specialists, teachers and pupils. This kind of programme is a new idea and another step forward in the promotion and development of education in Oman.

5.3.2 Moderately Importance Competencies

As shown in Table 4.8, seven items were found at the lowest level of importance, the value of their means ranging from 60.9 to 51.8. These competencies can be divided into three groups as follows: (1) items 36 and 37: methods of criticizing literary texts; (2) items 38 and 39: analysis of the tendencies of modern Arabic literature and modern literary criticism, which is closely linked to the first group. It should be mentioned here that the two items within each group are also closely linked to each other, for their original order was numbered in succession (33, 32; and 37, 38), and so was their new order (36, 37, 38 and 39 – see Table 4.8). This result indicates that there was agreement among the majority of the respondents in the sample of the present study that these competencies were only Moderately Important in teaching literary texts.

Before dealing specifically with the reasons why the above competencies were given a lower rating, let us discuss and explain briefly their significance in teaching literary texts according to the relevant literature. Since the word “criticism”, as Allen (1998: 361) says, “initially involves the process of making an evaluative decision”, the poetry texts, as al-Hashmi (2001: 169) states, “provide many opportunities for different opinions to be generated and discussed.” Therefore, as Gurrey (1959: 142) points out, pupils need to be trained in judgement by assessing the quality of the material that they read. He adds that the most effective method used in the poetry criticism is that of comparison, which is more clearly defined and decisive than any other. In addition, it is a method that can be applied to works of varying levels of difficulty, which means that clearly good and clearly bad poems can be selected for pupils to compare (ibid.: 148). In fact, this method is

supported by the long history of Arab literary criticism, during which, for example, poets used to enter their poems in a competition at 'Ukāẓ Fair near Taif, and the best poem was chosen by the judges or critics according to certain principles ('Ābdīn, 1970: 68–69; Bakalla, 1981: 260).

The tendencies and characteristics of modern Arabic literature have been described by Bakalla (1981: 169–172) as follows. One of the most noticeable features of modern Arabic literature is that it contains a richer variety of themes than the preceding periods because the Arabs are more open to external influences from both East and West. As a result, modern literature reflects the different aspects and manifestations of contemporary life. This has led to a huge expansion in other type of literature such as children's literature, novels, drama, short stories, and literary essays. Literary criticism, as Bakalla adds (p. 264), has also been influenced by the modern era and modern schools of literary criticism have been established to judge the new forms of literature. The status of literary criticism itself has been enhanced by becoming a subject of study in colleges and universities and its specialists are on the increase in the Arab world.

It is clear from the discussion that the competencies of literary criticism and knowledge of the features of modern Arabic literature are very important in education. They help to improve the pupils' ability to understand, analyse and appreciate Arabic literature. Nevertheless, the main question that comes to mind is why have these competencies been perceived to be only Moderately Important? The answer might be based on several reasons. Firstly, it is known that criticism is the last stage in studying a literary text and that it requires the highest level of thought.

This means that many competencies need to be learnt to reach that level, such as knowing the difficult words in the text, reading it aloud, understanding the ideas, analysing its units, choosing several texts for comparison, and so on. These activities take much time and effort. It is often a difficult task to achieve, especially when the classes usually comprise between 30 and 40 pupils, which means that there is very little opportunity to teach them the art of criticism.

Secondly, the competency of literary criticism is normally acquired by the training in and practice of evaluation and judgement strategies. However, many Arabic teachers lack adequate knowledge and experience in this area, possibly because they themselves were not given enough training in this aspect as students. From my experience as a university undergraduate, I noticed that the content of this subject focused only on the history and features of Arabic criticism without offering any practice. Earlier, at secondary school, the Arabic teacher tried to ignore answering the questions on literary criticism in the textbook, instead leaving us to answer them for homework without any reference to them at the next lesson. Maybe the teacher himself could not answer the questions.

Thirdly, the study of Arabic literature as a separate subject with its own class period and textbook is not part of the Arabic curriculum in the intermediate schools in Oman. Only a few literary texts are included in the textbook as stated in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3. Perhaps the low priority accorded to Arabic literature persuaded the majority of respondents to regard the relevant competencies as less important than the others, and so, logically, they gave them a low rating.

The third and last group rated Moderately Important comprises items 40, 41 and 42. These items deal with the metre and rhyme of the poetry text, which is related to prosody (*al-‘arūd*). Prosody is a distinct feature of Arabic poetry for it focuses on the end-rhyme of each line (*bayt*) in the poem and is associated with sound (Allen, 1998: 120). The value of the rhyme is derived from reading aloud with expression. There are many benefits from a reading that gives attention to the rhyme, as described by Gurrey (1959: 126–141). Reading aloud with expression awakens the mind to the music and sound of the words. Pupils are thus encouraged to pay greater attention to what the poet has said and search for its meaning. It also reveals some of the poem’s hidden beauty, which arouses the interest of the literary-minded pupils or those whose pleasure in poetry is on the wane. The power of appreciation and judgement is enhanced. Gurrey (1959: 140) states “pupils who are not interested, or who dislike poetry, do not participate in a poetic experience if they do not willingly attend – the *poetry* passes them by. They read words or hear them; but they may be deaf to their music.”

Clearly, a useful way of increasing pupils’ awareness of the qualities of a poetry text is for the teacher to read aloud with expression and train his pupils to do likewise. The teacher should also ensure that each pupil is listening carefully to the sound and rhyme so as to recognize any dissonance in the verse of the poem.

Despite the important role of the competencies connected with the poetry metre, it seems that the main reason why they are rated as least important is the lack of textbooks devoted to this part of Arabic curriculum at the intermediate stage. However, this aspect is included in the secondary school curriculum. Therefore, the

Arabic teacher may think that it is not his duty to train pupils in this aspect of literary texts at the intermediate stage. Another possible reason is that Arabic teachers themselves are unclear about the function and role of these competencies in literary texts, especially poetry.

To sum up, the findings presented in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 indicate that seven specific competencies were given the highest ratings, for they were represented by successful teaching in those aspects of the literary texts. Another seven competencies were rated Moderately Important. Furthermore, the discussion has unfortunately revealed an enormous gap between the ideal and current situations of teaching literary texts. This gap could be due to several reasons, the most important of which is the low status accorded to the teacher in the educational system as a result of the centralization of education. The system requires that all pupils in the same class have to study the same texts and topics because they are going to take the same final examination. Therefore, the teacher is obliged to finish the syllabus before the end of the year. The result is that our pupils are deprived of the opportunity to sample and enjoy their literary heritage.

Although the point of view mentioned above seems to be true, there are still ways open to the teacher to improve his teaching without breaking the rules of the centralized educational system. For example, he could, with his colleagues, establish a small library of literary texts in the classroom, where his pupils could be encouraged to borrow books to read in their own time under minimal supervision. In addition, to enable his pupils to hear and sample poetry, he could, if he doubted his

own ability to read well, play a good recording of a competent reader to give his pupils the opportunity of listening to a suitable model to follow.

Nowadays, there are numerous cassettes in bookshops containing recitations of poetry performed by verse choirs on different literary topics. A cassette that is particularly recommended is *Rawā'i 'al-Shi'r al-'Arabi*³ [The Best of Arabic Poetry]. This cassette includes the recitation of some famous poems by well-known poets such as 'Antara, al-Mutanabbī and Aḥmad Shawqī. There is also an annual festival for the recitation of poetry (*al-mahrajān al-inshādī*) at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. The most recent, the fourth, was held in March 2002, and, according to *al-Ma'ālim* (2002: 7), was attended by around ten thousand people. Such an event provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to participate in and benefit from the public reading of literary texts.

5.4 Findings Related to Teaching Oral Composition

According to the statistical analysis of the findings of this aspect as shown in Chapter Four, Tables 4.9 and 4.10, two levels of importance were found: Very Important and Important. In this section we shall focus on the first level, containing the competencies rated Very Important.

5.4.1 Very Important Competencies

According to Table 4.9 eight items were rated Very Important and they were divided into three categories. The first comprises items 1, 5 and 6: the correct pronunciation

³ This cassette is related to *mahrajān Kāẓima li al-turāth al-islāmī* issued by al-Şundūq al-waqfī li al-thaqāfa wa al-fikr in Kuwait.

of the letters and words of modern standard Arabic and the choosing of appropriate words and sentences to convey the desired meaning.

It should be noted here that the competencies of correct pronunciation of modern standard Arabic were also rated Very Important in the discussion of the findings of teaching reading. The reasons for the high rating of these items have already been explained in detail in section 5.2.1, so it is unnecessary to repeat the explanation here. However, it should be stressed that these competencies enhance the integration of reading and oral composition since both help pupils to speak and read correctly with a good accent.

Another point that should be made here is that although “speech is much more than pronunciation...it is impossible without it!” (Tench, 1981: 109). Furthermore, the competencies of pronunciation, including stress and intonation, as stated by Pittman (1967: 124, 127), are necessary, for a change in pronunciation produces a change in the meaning of what the speaker is telling the listeners. For example, the use of incorrect intonation can change a polite and friendly expression into one meaning the opposite of what was intended. In addition, a change in the cadence of a sentence can transform a request into a command.

The remaining competency in the first group, item 5, focuses on the pupils’ linguistic repertoire, which helps them to express a precise meaning. As a result, pupils can use the new vocabulary to convey desired meaning efficiently, since “communication competency can be defined as the ability to use language to communicate within a specific situation” (Rubin, 1982: 19). In other words, if a person is to function effectively in society, he needs to achieve a certain level of

competency in the use of language for communication (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980: 186). The pupil can do this by using from his stored knowledge the new vocabulary and accepted phrases and structures, which are evidence of his confidence in using them independently of the teacher. According to Richards (1983: 224), words that play a less crucial role in the message may be dropped by the speaker and other words given more prominence in their place. This is necessary because, as Rivers (1971: 190) says, choosing words carelessly means that the message decoded may be quite different from that which the speaker intended to convey. Therefore, it should be noted that words, as Lado (1965: 212–213) points out, are not only a list of lexical items but also much more. They are a highly complex system of classes of items including meaning, forms, grammatical function and so on.

This group of competencies is clearly concerned with the characteristics of the language, especially as a system of sounds. This aspect has already been discussed in detail in Chapter Two: for more information, see section 2.1.2.

The second category comprises items 2, 3, 7 and 8, which focus on the way in which the ideas of a speech are treated and expressed. These competencies summarize the logical steps that should be followed in teaching pupils to master the competency of oral composition. After the topic of composition has been chosen, the next step is for the pupils, under the supervision of their teacher, to identify and make a list in the form of points of the basic ideas and elements, which in itself will encourage the pupils to speak successfully. Then the ideas and elements need to be sorted into a logical order, an exercise that should be given sufficient attention. The

accomplishment of these steps can help pupils to convey their ideas clearly and fluently.

Included in the second category defined above is the competency of expressing ideas fluently. In this context, Tench (1981: 61) says: "Fluency is the smooth joining-up of elements at an acceptable speed of delivery." On the same page he adds that it includes many aspects of language such as pronunciation, grammar, appropriate vocabulary, style and discourse. Using these linguistic aspects with a minimum of effort and with a minimum of conscious decision-taking indicates that the speaker has fluency (ibid.: 62).

There are, however, a number of factors which affect the fluency of speech. Among them are tiredness, embarrassment and fear. The subject matter also affects fluency, for a lack of familiarity with it leads to less fluency. Furthermore, hesitation and pauses also interrupt fluency, although they do not necessarily indicate a serious impediment. Hesitation and pauses, in fact, are common features of native speech. They are used, for example, in searching for just the right word to express a particular meaning, or for rephrasing a sentence (ibid.: 62). Likewise, Richards (1983: 225) states that between 30 and 50 per cent of speaking time may consist of hesitation and pauses in natural speech and this is yet another factor that affects fluency to some extent.

The mastery of the competency of fluency helps the speaker in his composition to talk to others with a self-confidence which reflects his personality. Therefore, to achieve an improvement in the pupil's ability to express himself unselfconsciously and easily, his personality should be reinforced by practice and

effective participation in the oral lesson. Such practice is necessary because, according to Gurrey (1959: 36), during a speech a speaker's personality can create problems such as self-consciousness, nervousness, shyness and defects in articulation. Rivers (1971: 193) also states that there are some personality factors which affect pupils' performance in the oral part of the lesson. Some pupils are naturally cautious or meticulously careful, whereas others are more sensitive. These pupils, therefore, are easily embarrassed or upset if found to be in error or not understood. Therefore, they prefer to say nothing rather than express themselves incorrectly.

The third category of competencies rated Very Important comprises item 8, which is the last number in Table 4.9. It relates to the conversation etiquette that a speaker is required to follow. The importance of this competency is based on the significant role of the conversation itself in developing the competencies of speech. Richards (1990: 67) states that conversation is an opportunity to provide practice in both accuracy and fluency by encouraging pupils to talk. For the duration of a class period, the teacher can use whatever suitable sources, materials and techniques are to hand.

Again Richards (1990: 68) adds that since conversation entails collaboration, a basic rule is that only one person speaks at a time and he does not say everything that he wants to say in a single utterance. This means that there is a system or strategy of "turn-taking", where the speaker may become the listener. For the conversation to be successful, the speaker should follow certain rules of etiquette.

Some of these rules, which include respecting others, are listed by Richards (1990: 68) as follows:

- using interjections to signal a request for a turn, such as “Mm-hmm”, “Yeah”, and rising intonation
- using facial or other gestures to indicate a wish to take a turn
- accepting a turn offered by another speaker by responding to a question or by providing the second part of an adjacency pair (e.g., expressing thanks in response to a compliment)
- completing or adding to something said by the speaker

To achieve the basic strategies of conversation, the role of the teacher should be to guide the pupils. The rules of conversation, as listed by Rivers (1971: 204) and Rixon (1981: 63–64), are as follows. They state that the teacher himself, for instance, should not talk too much, for his interruptions would distort the purpose of the conversation. He should also not try to correct every mistake, for this will discourage, frustrate and inhibit the pupils from speaking freely. However, the teacher can perform certain roles. He should encourage reluctant and shy pupils to participate in the conversation. In addition, he can be as a source of information from which pupils can draw guidance on the use of vocabulary, new structures, or the rephrasing of a sentence to make it clearer to others. He can also point out a correction which he feels must be made immediately without interrupting the flow of the conversation.

The conclusion which can be drawn from the findings discussed previously in section 5.4.1 is that the success in teaching pupils to master these competencies is largely dependent on the type of conversation topic and the extent to which it is

related to the pupils' lives and interests. This point of view is confirmed by Gurrey (1959: 39):

The young pupil in the lower or middle school will often find himself as Rousseau did: "When forced to speak, I am at a loss for words; and if anyone looks to me, I am instantly out of countenance; but if animated with my subject, I express my thoughts with ease."⁴ This gives us our clue: whatever the mode or form of the oral work, the subject of the pupils' talks must not only be within the capacities and experience of the pupils, but must *lie close* to the heart of their interests and dearest concerns.

It could be concluded also that the above competencies emphasize the integration of oral composition and other aspects of teaching Arabic. However, such integration should be the result of the point of view that speech is the goal of communication and all other aspects are means to this end (Shaḥāta, 1992: 242). An example of this integration is that of speaking and listening. Both are integral parts of total oral communication, for such communication between humans cannot occur without a speaker and a listener. Each is also crucial in the development of the ability of the other, the conversation being a typical example. There is, therefore, no doubt that training and encouraging pupils to speak effectively, such as expressing their feelings and thoughts correctly and fluently, is a significant purpose of teaching/learning language.

5.5 Findings Related to Teaching Written Composition

The findings of this aspect, as presented in Chapter Four, section 4.2.5, show that twelve competencies were rated Very Important, fourteen Important, and only one

⁴ Cited from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions* (1953). Although I searched for this book, I could not find it.

Moderately Important. The following discussion will concentrate on the first and third levels.

5.5.1 Very Important Competencies

Table 4.11 shows that this level comprised twelve items covering three main topics. Firstly, treatment of the idea while writing about it – items: 1, 7, 9, 10 and 11. These items focus on the pupils' attention that should be paid to specific features of the written language, such as choosing the appropriate words and writing suitable sentences, and organizing the clarity, variety and sequence of ideas. The importance of these competencies is examined below.

Our readers' expectations, our own purpose and the content of our ideas influence the way in which we present our ideas while writing (Raines, 1983: 116). Normally, the appropriate vocabulary is essential for conveying ideas to others. In this context, the vocabulary of language, according to Gaskell (1998: 4), is its total word-stock, and a person's vocabulary is the total number of words that he can recognize. However, again Gaskell (1998: 28–29) adds that it is difficult for pupils to choose the right words from a vast vocabulary, for some words have synonyms or near-synonyms, other words have extremely subtle shades of meaning, and they may have a different meaning in different contexts. As a result, pupils should acquire the ability to choose the vocabulary that is appropriate for the subject about which they wish to write.

Mastering the above competency leads to the next step of written composition described by Byrne (1979: 1, 18) who points out that words have to be arranged in a particular order according to the rules to form sentences, which in turn have to be

linked in certain ways to produce a coherent text. There are logical devices that enable the writer to organize his ideas and help his readers follow him from one sentence to another. These devices include words such as “besides”, “furthermore”, “in addition”, and “moreover”. Used properly, this kind of device tells the reader that the two sentences should be taken together.

Therefore, pupils need to examine a text carefully to see if the sentences hang together according to the basic principle that old information comes before new information in a sentence (Raimes, 1983: 57). This suggests that pupils “have to think about what to write about, which words and sentences to choose and how to organize the ideas” (ibid.: 115). This demand, as a result, may allow pupils to work together to decide which sentence comes first, second and so on until all the sentences have been organized in logical order in each paragraph. I think that the purpose of this co-operation between pupils is to ensure that every pupil has not only something to write, but that ideas and language are processed freely in his mind while writing. Clarity of ideas is also a very valuable competency that helps pupils to produce a good piece of writing. In this regard, Gurrey (1959: 85) mentions that “the mastering of the skill of clear explanation will also normally be part of the composition course.”

Bearing the importance of the above competencies in mind, Pittman (1967: 143) has pointed out that it is poor teaching to allow pupils to try written composition without having mastered the competencies necessary to make the appropriate choice of tenses, of nouns, articles and the sequence of simple actions. This may also be the reason why Lado (1964: 147) emphasizes that for composition to be readily

understood by the intended reader, it must be well organized, and within this organization, the content must be so selected that it will have the desired effect upon him.

The second topic, which is linked to the Very Important competencies, contains five items: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. These items, as shown in Table 4.11, focus on the style that pupils should follow in their writing. It consists of dividing the topic into introduction, presentation and conclusion. Accuracy should be borne in mind, quotations chosen according to their suitability, the rules of dictation followed and errors corrected.

In this context, Lado (1964: 148) states that the effectiveness of the composition depends on several factors such as order of presentation, emphasis, point of view where the same subject may be written about from different points of view, and style. With reference to accuracy, Byrne (1979: 1, 3) states that a written composition needs to be re-read and several versions of a text may have to be written before a satisfactory result is achieved. Byrne (1979) adds on the same pages that the reason why care has to be taken with writing is because the text is aimed at a reader who is often not physically present. This means that there can be no direct interaction between writer and reader. Therefore, the writer must ensure that what he has written can be understood without any further help from him. To achieve this aim and to convey the intended meaning, many devices can be employed such as punctuation and underlining. Furthermore, Raimes (1983: 116) states that in order to show the reader that there is a basis for the statement made by the writer, the topic

is usually elaborated and sustained by adding supporting details, such as facts, comparisons and contrasts.

From the above discussion it could be concluded that written composition gives pupils a better opportunity to practise many linguistic aspects. One example is dictation rules, since spelling is a problem for many users of language and mistakes of this kind affect writing. Such practice is particularly important for those pupils who write with difficulty and those who are lacking linguistic ability in dictation. According to Raimes (1983: 150), it is known that errors in writing constitute one of the big problems of composition teaching, because “language that is too distorted by mistakes will fail to communicate anything” (Rixon, 1981: 27). Therefore, correcting such errors is a part of the teaching of writing and pupils cannot improve their writing if their work is not corrected.

In this context, Gurrey (1959: 93–94) declares that “the most important part of the plan of training pupils to note and correct their mistakes, and perhaps the hardest part, is to develop this feeling of responsibility for their own writing.” To achieve this aim, the teacher, for example, should analyse with his pupils pieces of writing produced by professional writers. This exercise will enable them to see different patterns of clear organization, which at the same time have few or no linguistic errors, and this is very useful for them (Raimes, 1983: 117; Ismā‘īl, 1991: 196–197).

The third group of Very Important competencies comprises items 8 and 12, which focus on the motivation of pupils to write on various topics. The importance of these competencies stems from the fact, as stated by Byrne (1979: 30), that pupils

cannot be expected to master every variety of the written form of the language. This is because many of these forms will not be relevant to their needs. It is, therefore, essential to select appropriate topics so that pupils can practise the range of written styles that are particularly useful to them.

It should be also be borne in mind that the teacher should focus on quality rather than quantity in training pupils in written composition. Unfortunately, teachers have ignored this aspect. Raimes (1983: 14), for example, emphasizes this problem in a description of the current method of choosing a composition topic:

They [the teachers] think up a topic or search through the textbooks to find one, ask students to write about it, mark all the papers, and then much too quickly move on and think up another topic. A good topic is seldom explored beyond the one composition that students write. What a waste that is! ... Our problem isn't really finding enough topics; it's developing enough tasks from the good topics we have.

Ramies' statement suggests that those who teach written composition should be required to consider the pupils themselves and their own needs and interests as a useful source of suitable topics that prepare them for real life. Al-Sayyid (1988: 414–415) lists several sources of topics useful for pupils at the intermediate stage. Among them are current international events about which pupils learn in the various media, stories that they have enjoyed, school activities, letters for different occasions, reports, advertisements, other aspects of the Arabic curriculum and other school subjects.

5.5.2 Moderately Important Competencies

As shown in Table 4.13, there was only one item (number 27) rated Moderately Important, and it comprises the competency of “acquiring the habit of writing quickly”. This finding seems, on the one hand, to be in contrast to item number 1 mentioned earlier in section 5.5.1, which was rated Very Important and comprised “bearing in mind the train of thought and organizing ideas logically when writing” (see Table 4.11). This finding, on the other hand, seems to indicate that there is agreement among the respondents to the questionnaire to rate item 27 only Moderately Important although rating item 1 Very Important.

One explanation of this point of view is that the respondents of the questionnaire may have thought that if pupils are to be taught to organize sentences carefully, they should not be taught to write quickly, because each contradicts the other. Perhaps the respondents believe that to express a precise meaning, a text needs to be revised and rewritten until a satisfactory standard is reached. This approach takes a long time, which contradicts the idea of writing quickly.

In my opinion, the respondents are probably right when pupils have unlimited time at their disposal to organize their writing. However, this is not true when pupils have no control over the time available for writing, which obliges them to write quickly. Taking notes while listening to lectures, seminars and symposia is a typical example. Here, pupils have to write quickly. Although a number of them, especially those at advanced level, nowadays use their personal computers (laptop) for taking notes, they still need to type quickly and accurately. This suggests that both competencies – writing quickly and organizing the ideas – should be taught and acquired simultaneously.

From the discussion in this section of the findings related to teaching written composition, the following conclusions can be drawn. Learning to write is one of the most difficult tasks that a pupil undertakes and one that few people can be said to master fully. In addition, learning to write well takes a long time and this produces anxiety and frustration in many pupils (Richards, 1990: 100). Moreover, writing can be difficult because the writer is required to demonstrate his control of a number of variables simultaneously. Writing a sentence, for example, requires the control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. The writer must also be able to organise ideas, and structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and text so that a reader can understand them (Byrne, 1979: 5; Bell & Burnaby [1984] as cited in Nunan, 1992: 36).

Furthermore, Byrne (1979: 5), Raimes (1983: 4) and Gaskell (1998: 1) point out that although most people can speak their own language at least adequately for their social needs, not everyone masters the various competencies of writing it effectively. Many native speakers find that difficult, which severely limits their experience of writing language. This means, according to these three authors, that learning to write a language is not just a natural extension of learning to speak it and these two procedures are not identical. Their explanation is that although we learn to speak our first language at home without systematic instruction, most of us have to be taught at school how to write the same language. The result, as Richards (1990: 100) states, is that many pupils leave school with a poor command of writing and most of them will write a composition only at an elementary level. He adds that even

at university level, students require further instruction in writing, which is provided by teams of instructors who teach courses in composition for new undergraduates.

Clearly, the difficulty of mastering the competencies of written composition indicates that more attention should be devoted to its teaching. Unfortunately, both teachers and pupils often neglect this recommendation. Nevertheless, it is supported by many writers, such as Plowman (1971: 53); Madkūr (1991: 271) and al-Batal (1995: 125). In particular, Mersand (1977: 114) points out that “in spite of years of training, our students fail to become easy, clear and forceful writers.” Mersand reports on the same page that he himself conducted a study in 1960 on attitudes toward English teaching. The results of his study showed that the largest area needing improvement was written composition. Of a total of 76 recommendations made to improve the teaching of English, 39 were directed at written composition.

5.6 Findings Related to Teaching Grammar

It has been mentioned in Chapter Four, section 4.2.6 that fourteen items were rated Very Important, compared with only five items rated Important. The importance of the fourteen Very Important competencies is discussed below.

5.6.1 Very Important Competencies

As shown in Table 4.14, all competencies rated Very Important were related to the teaching of grammar: syntax (*naḥw*) and morphology (*ṣarf*). This includes mainly levels or aspects of knowledge, explanation, analysis and application. Each aspect contains specific items, which can be classified into the following five groups:

Firstly, it is not surprising that this level consists of fourteen items. This result reflects the high value attached to grammar in teaching Arabic. In support of

this view, Lado (1964: 90) points out that “anyone using a language must use its grammar; mere words without grammar do not constitute a language.” Grammar, then, “is a way of analysing and describing how the words of a language are used in a relation to each other to convey meaning” (Gaskell, 1998: 12).

The first group of Very Important competencies comprise items 2, 4, 12 and 13 and are related to knowledge of the grammatical rules by identifying texts that contain relevant examples. The importance of these items is probably based on the view that the first stage of any grammatical lesson is usually devoted to learning the relevant rules. To achieve this aim, certain principles should be taken into account. Among them, as shown by Sitātiya et al. (1985: 139), is teaching grammar with the use of lively and beautiful texts that relate to the pupils’ lives and interests. A selection of suitable examples should be taken from these texts as a basis for discussing the grammatical rules.

The accomplishment of the first stage leads to the second group of the Very Important competencies, which consists of item 6 (Table 4.14). It is related to discussing and analysing the concepts. Again Sitātiya et al. (1985: 139) point out that the Arabic teacher should choose examples that help explain the meaning of grammatical concepts. He adds on the same page that the following examples do not explain the meaning of the subject (*al-fā’il*), when a pupil needs to know this concept: *namā al-zar‘u* (the plant grew), *inkasara al-zujāju* (the glass broke), *irtafa‘a al-jidāru* (the wall rose). From these examples a pupil cannot understand how a plant can perform the act of growing, how a glass can perform the act of breaking, and so on. Therefore, suitable examples in this context are those which pupil can

notice and become aware of them, such as *kataba al-tilmīdhu al-darsa* (the pupil wrote the lesson) and *fataḥa Aḥmadu al-bāba* (Ahmad opened the door).

The third group comprises items 1, 3, 5, 7, 11 and 14, which deal with the application of linguistic rules to other aspects of language and other school subjects. It should be emphasized here that a full and exact knowledge of the grammatical rules is virtually useless to the pupils without its application. Lado (1964: 90) supports this view by stating that grammar that is focused on the memorization of rules and the use of terminology has been challenged by many and relegated by linguistics to a minor role in teaching language. However, grammar as patterns of form and arrangement, including intonation, stress, and juncture cannot be so relegated.

Shahāta (1992: 202) describes the current status of teaching Arabic grammar. In his view, Arabic teachers are devoting more attention to the theoretical aspect than the practical aspect. He adds that the reason for this approach is that there is great stress on the knowledge of the rules in the grammar textbooks, which means that teachers cannot find sufficient time for application activities. In other words, the current approach omits a great deal of practical experience that is required for the precise and scientific comprehension of the serious role of teaching grammar. As a result, it is necessary to forge a link between the knowledge of the various grammatical rules and the ability to apply them effectively and appropriately when teaching grammar.

Part of the achievement of such a link is understanding the connection between syntax and morphology and treating them both as one aspect. Matthews

(1974: 7) states that “since morphology is traditionally ‘that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the structure of words’, and the word is not itself a theoretical entity, then a division between morphology and syntax has no theoretical status either.” Furthermore, al-Jiwārī (1984: 20) and al-Sayyid (1988: 460) state that grammar does include phonetics, the internal form of the word vowelization, and the structure of words and sentences.

The role of morphology is emphasized by al-Toma (1961: 405):

the Arabic alphabet without vowel signs, which are not regarded as original elements of the alphabet, cannot portray the phonetical pronunciation of the word. For example, the word which consists of *k t b* may be pronounced as *kataba* (he wrote) or as *kutiba* (it was written) or as *kutub* (books). ... Despite the widely held opinion that one can find the context as guide for the correct pronunciation, as it has been done for centuries, it still requires some effort to read correctly.

The aim of all of the grammatical elements mentioned above is to improve the pronunciation, the comprehension and the use of language as expressed in written and oral form (see items 5 and 7 in Table 4.14). This concept emphasizes the integration of grammar and other aspects such as speaking. In this context, King (1965: 190) states that to develop a practical skill in speaking the language, the pupil must work towards a level of automatic control of grammar which enables him to manipulate words without hesitation and with perfect accuracy.

Another form of the application of linguistic rules is *i'rāb*. Beeston (1968: 2), al-Jiwārī (1984: 21), Bohas et al. (1990: 50) and Ryding (1994: 176) point out that *i'rāb* is the most important part and is considered to be the central feature of Arabic grammar. Some values of using *i'rāb* are stated by Wickens (1980: 13), such

as making the reading of the word either less ambiguous or absolutely certain, avoiding any misreading such as in the Qur'ān, poetry or when using foreign or unfamiliar words. The importance of *i'rāb* in expressing the meaning has been discussed in some detail in Chapter Two, section 2.1.3.2, where it is stated that the ability of *i'rāb* depends on a previous comprehension of the meaning of a sentence. In reverse, this means that someone who can parse the words of a sentence, can understand the meaning of the sentence and recognize the function of a word in it by means of its *i'rāb*.

However, it is possible that the importance of *i'rāb* has resulted in an undue emphasis being placed on it in the Arabic curriculum, including numerous related concepts such as *taqdīr* (implication), *iḍmār* (prosodical ellipsis) and *ishtighāl* (syntactical regimen). It appears that *i'rāb* is being treated as an end in itself of teaching grammar, rather than as a means of improving the competencies of comprehension and communication. In this context, al-Batal (1994: 166) summarizes the view of Anīs Frayḥa on this point:

Frayḥa points out that spending endless hours in teaching students complicated grammatical rules and ways of *i'rāb* "inflection", as is being done in most Arabic programmes today, does not help students improve their production of the language, nor does it help them improve their comprehension of the language.

Therefore, this way of treating *i'rāb* can cause many difficulties for both teachers and pupils. In this regard, Gurrey (1959: 100) states that since writers of school grammars have neglected the useful and interesting aspect of the subject by ignoring its relevance to comprehension and expression, it is indisputable that very

many teachers dislike teaching grammar. He adds on the same page that teachers who were taught only parsing and analysis on very rigid lines at school may well be convinced that grammar cannot be taught in any way that is useful to the pupils.

The final aspect related to the application of grammar is using its rules in the new grammar lessons and other school subjects as shown by items 11 and 14 in Table 4.14. It has already been mentioned that pupils can find the grammar lesson difficult to understand. However, if the grammar teacher has the ability, the lessons could be made interesting and varied. Here, pupils are expected not only to know the grammatical rules but they are also supposed to be able to apply them to a range of situations.

To enable pupils to achieve this aim, grammar lessons based on textbooks should be in a logical order so that each lesson follows on from the previous one and builds on it. Furthermore, other school subjects should be used to encourage pupils to practise the grammatical rules, since these subjects are written in linguistic form. However, the challenge to be faced is how the teachers of other school subjects can be encouraged to apply grammar in their lesson. Although those teachers teach different subjects, it does not mean that they are not required to help pupils in their linguistic improvement. I think, therefore, that it is very necessary for them to possess the minimal rules and knowledge of Arabic.

The fourth group of Very Important items consists of numbers 8 and 9: the competencies of discovering and correcting errors. The widespread increase in grammatical errors is of concern to many and is emphasized by numerous writers, such as Qūra (1981: 282) and Madkūr (1991: 325). It is well known that

grammatical errors have been the primary reason for the emergence of the study of syntax (*naḥw*) in the Arabic language (al-Jiwārī, 1984: 18, 20, 25; Ma'rūf, 1987: 165–166). To avoid such errors, more practice should be done. Gurrey (1959: 102) points out that teaching grammar without direct application cannot help the pupils and train them to avoid grammatical mistakes.

The last group consists of item 10 and is related to the competency of motivating pupils to study grammar. The main point that should be made here is that this competency is a logical result of the earlier discussion of the difficulties encountered in the teaching of grammar, which leads many teachers and pupils to dislike and neglect it.

As a result, Arabic teachers feel that their pupils are not motivated and encouraged to study grammar. This is probably true, bearing in mind that the traditional method is the one which is usually followed in teaching grammar. Many writers, such as Sistātiya et al. (1985: 138), Ahmed (1987: 166) and Ismā'īl (1991: 218) point out that this method is boring and rigid. It focuses on the memorization of rules without any analysis and application, and there is no link between rules and meanings. This situation means that teaching grammar becomes more complicated, difficult and useless. In this regard, Suleiman (1993: 83) presents the opinion of Ibrāhīm Tūqān on the teaching of Arabic grammar as follows:

Referring to Arabic grammar teaching in particular, Ibrāhīm Tūqān explains how the teachers' efforts to base themselves on choice attested materials drawn from the Qur'ān, the Prophetic *ḥadīths*, ancient poetry, and Sibawaihi's *Kitāb* fail to achieve the desired result of enabling the students to use the language correctly. Even after all this effort, Tūqān points

out, the student renders the second part of the construct (*al-muḍāf ilaihi*) and the object (*mafʿūl bihi*) in the nominative instead of the genitive and the accusative, respectively.

A similar view has been expressed by Anīs Frayḥa, as shown by al-Batal (1994: 162), who notes:

The methods used in teaching Arabic in general and Arabic grammar in particular are very traditional and are the main reason behind the negative attitudes which Arab students develop towards the language. ... As a result of these obsolete methods, Arab students today spend endless hours trying to master complex grammatical rules that are hardly related to real communication in the language.

These descriptions of the methods used in teaching grammar clearly emphasize the importance of the role of motivation. Abū Lubda et al. (1996: 169) point out that motivation is a crucial requirement, for without it learning cannot be achieved. It is a group of feelings that stimulate the pupil to participate in learning activities that will help him achieve the desired objectives. The authors add that there are two kinds of motivation: external and internal. External motivation comes from the teachers, the school, parents and friends. Internal motivation comes from the pupil himself. In my opinion, the respondents to the questionnaire might have realized that their efforts to consider and satisfy their pupils' needs had not been sufficient, which was why they rated motivation a Very Important competency for their future teaching.

A review of the competencies rated Very Important (section 5.6.1) produces the following conclusion. The primary aim of teaching grammar is to enable pupils to express themselves correctly and freely either orally or in writing. This suggests that grammar should be considered as a means rather than an end in itself. However,

it seems that the time and effort given to teaching grammar is still devoted to traditional methods that depend on the non-functional use of grammar.

One of the main reasons for using traditional methods in teaching grammar is perhaps that many teachers of Arabic do not know the real value and function of grammatical rules and they do not realise the instructional purposes of teaching grammar. It could be said that the case of the Arabic teachers is similar to that of the English teachers, according to Lee (1965: 66): “Unfortunately there are many English-speaking teachers who assume that because they speak English they are well qualified to teach it: Their ideas on the phonetic and grammatical make-up of English are sometimes extremely naïve.”

It is obvious that the teaching of grammar requires complete rethinking, especially regarding its purpose. This can be partly achieved by encouraging the Arabic teachers to apply grammatical rules to texts exemplifying daily life.

5.7 Findings Related to Teaching Dictation and Punctuation

The importance of teaching this aspect is supported by the numerous competencies rated Very Important. As shown in Table 4.16, fifteen out of the total of twenty-one items were rated at this level. The importance of these items is discussed below.

5.7.1 Very Important Competencies

The significant role of teaching dictation and punctuation has been discussed fully in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3F. Its high priority was probably why the respondents to the questionnaire rated most of the competencies Very Important. The findings of this level can be divided into four groups as follows.

The first group deals with the knowledge of the basic rules of dictation: items 1, 2, 5 and 7 (see Chapter Four, Table 4.16). It should be noted that from the point of view of dictation, “the ultimate unit of language is the letter; one or more of these may form a syllable, and one or more syllables may form that which is the general conception of a word” (Palmer, 1968: 20). On this basis, therefore, pupils should learn to recognize the elements of words to master their pronunciation and spelling.

In connection with the above topic is the knowledge of the various punctuation signs. As Gaskell (1998: 22) points out, “Punctuation can affect the meaning and nuance of what is written”. Obviously the meaning of “What is the beauty of the sky?” is not the same as the meaning of “How beautiful the sky!”. The first sentence is a question and it needs an answer. The second does not need any answer since it is an exclamatory sentence where the writer tries to show his exclamation about the beauty of the sky. A similar view was expressed by Dechant & Smith (1977: 250): “Punctuation is not only a set of rules to be learned but also a way to facilitate the grasp of meaning.” Ahmed (1999: 104) also states that we need punctuation to pause for breath and to effect the pronunciation of the words, intonation and syllable separation.

The second group covers the recognition of differences between the shapes and sounds of letters and words: items: 4, 10 and 11. These competencies centre on the link between dictation and pronunciation. The importance of this point is based on the argument that pupils should not be introduced to a writing system until the sounds of the language and their patterns have been thoroughly learned. The reason is that dictation from this point of view can be useful in increasing the pupils’ ability

to recognize sounds and in facilitating their production of these sounds (Sawyer & Silver, 1965: 326–327).

Similarly, according to Dakin (1982: 111), dictation requires more than an ability to spell words and punctuate sentences. He adds that to practise dictation, pupils must first hear correctly what they have to write down. To hear correctly, they must overcome at least four recognition problems: (1) recognition of distinctive sounds; (2) identification of homophones; (3) identification of words, phrases and sentences; and (4) identification of intonation patterns.

Therefore, to help the pupils master the competencies relating to the recognition and pronunciation of letters and words, the teacher should be aware of the sources of the problems and design appropriate remedial programmes. He should also identify the pronunciation errors that create problems in communication. To enable the Arabic teachers to achieve this objective, phonology should be an essential part of their professional pre-service training since this subject also helps them improve their own pronunciation.

The third group (items 3, 8, 9 and 15) focuses on the application of the knowledge of dictation and punctuation. As Pittman (1967: 174) states, dictation is an extremely valuable exercise for language learners. It tests, besides the ability to write and spell, the learner's ear and comprehension. This suggests that dictation can be used as a revision exercise of sound and sentence structure. Pittman (1967) adds on the same page that teachers, however, use dictation only to test spelling and writing ability, which makes it too long and difficult. Ahmed (1987: 203) also points out that it is common practice in dictation lessons to teach pupils to write

isolated words rather than complete sentences or phrases, and that no attention is given to the correct use of punctuation.

Clearly, mastering the rules of dictation can play a significant role in producing coherent writing and these rules can also forge the link between dictation and other aspects of Arabic such as listening, reading and oral composition. However, there are some difficulties that somewhat obstruct the achievement of this aim.

These difficulties introduce the fourth group, which comprises items 6, 12, 13 and 14. It concerns overcoming the difficulties of writing the Arabic alphabet and correcting the errors. The two main issues related to this topic are, according to the findings from the questionnaire: (1) the use of the *hamza*, soft *alif* and open and tied *tā'*; and (2) the writing of non-phonetic words.

The importance of the first issue is based on the respondents' opinion that their pupils suffered from such difficulties, particularly in writing the *hamza*. This situation indicates that Arabic teachers should be qualified to teach their pupils to encounter and overcome such difficulties, which are caused by scores of factors. Among the factors causing difficulty in writing the *hamza*, for example, are the various possibilities of writing it. Many writers confirm this point. Parkinson (1990: 270), for example, describes the *hamza* as follows:

The *hamza*, which represents the glottal stop, is the only alphabetic sign in Arabic whose shape is determined not just by its position in the word in relation to other letters, but also by phonetic aspects of the word. ... The *hamza* has only one shape, but it may appear either

alone on the line or above (or below) one of three ‘seats’. These seats are versions of three long Arabic vowels aa, uu and ii named respectively alif, waaw, and yaa.

He adds (p. 271) that although most native speakers agree that the choice of the written form of the *hamza* is determined by rules, it is clear that they neither agree on the rules nor apply them consistently. He continues that this situation, as a result, “has led to full-scale language academy studies and calls for *hamza* reform” (p. 271).

In a similar vein, Awde & Samano (1986: 85) state that the rules determining the case of writing *hamza* “are pretty complicated, and if the truth to be told most foreigners learning Arabic (and indeed not a few Arabs) never really master them.” Shaḥāta (1992: 314) also points out that among the reasons for the difficulties of Arabic writing are the variety of dictation rules and the numerous differences among scholars regarding these rules. The result, he adds, is that the way in which some words are written differs among the Arab nations. An example of these differences is the way in which the *hamza* is written in the middle of the word *yaqra’ūna*. The *hamza* in this word can be written in three ways: يقرأون – يقرءون – يقرأون

With regard to the second issue, which is related to writing non-phonetic words, it can be said that although “Arabic is an extremely phonetic language, words are spelt as they are heard” (Jadwat, 1987: 35), there are still some words whose pronunciation and spelling do not match fully. This aspect of writing is one reason why Arabic is somewhat difficult to learn (Qūra, 1981: 11). This point has been explained and discussed in some detail in Chapter Two, section 3.2.3.3F.

Consequently, the range of difficulties described above, which continue to exist in Arabic writing, can produce undesirable results. It is the common errors that are widespread among pupils and even among the Arabic teachers themselves, particularly, according to al-Sayyid (1986: 76), in planning their lessons. A review of the relevant literature provides evidence that the problem of spelling mistakes is spreading, which leads to a low standard of writing by the pupils.

Wing & Baddeley (1980: 252) point out that “a complaint often heard from examiners is that the exam scripts they have to mark contain frequent spelling errors.” It seems that this type of complaint has been the subject of study by numerous researchers. A survey of the studies dealing with spelling errors has been carried out by al-Sayyid (1988: 555–560). This survey indicates that the most common errors are the *hamza* in its different shapes, soft *alif*, open and tied *tā'* and words which have similar letters and similar sounds. Jābir (1991: 178) also notes that some student-teachers in the colleges of education commit serious errors in the use of the *hamza*, soft *alif*, open and tied *tā'*. He adds (p. 179) that a weakness in pupils' spelling stems from the primary school without any remedial action being taken.

There are, in fact, many reasons for committing spelling errors. However, a very important reason, as put forward by Yūnus et al. (n.d: 258) and Khāṭir et al. (1990: 225), is the method of teaching dictation. They state that the traditional method focuses only on dictating the text of separate words without mentioning any rules or analysis of the text or application of these rules. The old method used in teaching dictation is criticized also by many writers, among them Peters (1975: 5),

who declares: "Is it not still said that the teaching of spelling is a relic of the old order, when teachers drilled their pupils like circus animals, without any concern for the development of their understanding or their desire to learn?"

From the above comments on the traditional methods and the opinion that "correcting is one of the teacher's major functions in any classroom" (Davis & Rinvoluturi, 1989: 11) can be drawn the following conclusions. There is no doubt that the teacher himself can decide better than anyone whether a pupil has or has not mastered the competencies of dictation. Therefore, it is essential that the teacher knows how the written work will be marked and uses other methods that are more suitable for helping his pupils to acquire the habit of noting and dealing with spelling errors. Furthermore, the teacher should bear in mind that effective writing consists in not merely correcting errors but also in learning from these errors in the future.

Lastly, a comment should be included on the reason why items 13 and 14, which focus on the competency of "following the approved method for correcting errors made in dictation", were classified as Very Important (see Table 4.16). The Arabic teachers who participated in answering the questionnaire found themselves following a useless method of correcting errors. They corrected the pupils' errors by putting a letter symbol to indicate the type of errors made, whether lexical, syntactical, morphological, or orthographical. However, many pupils do not understand the meaning of these symbols so they were not aware of the nature of their errors, let alone able to correct them. In addition, pupils were not encouraged to resubmit the corrected versions for further checking by the teacher.

Furthermore, many teachers take a long time to return their pupils' written

work. This delay, as highlighted by Ma'rūf (1987: 62); al-Sa'dī et al. (1992: 45) and Shaḥāta (1992: 326), can produce undesirable results, such as fixing the errors in the pupils' brains. In support of this view, Rivers (1971: 256) points out:

Ideally, individual efforts at writing should be read by the teacher as soon as possible after completion, then corrected and sometimes rewritten by the student without delay. A great deal of uncorrected writing is merely a waste of time and energy. It consolidates the student's bad habits, which are very difficult to eradicate at a later date.

To conclude this examination of the findings regarding the teaching of dictation and punctuation, it could be said that there is strong supporting evidence for all the competencies (15 items) to be classified as Very Important. The findings also show that Arabic teachers seem to lack most of these competencies. This could be largely due to their insufficient knowledge of this aspect of language since it is not accorded high priority in the Arabic training programmes at the colleges of education. In addition, the aspects of dictation have been neglected by the inspectors when they check the teachers' classroom practice in the schools.

A review of the relevant literature indicates that by the end of the intermediate stage, the majority of pupils are way below the expected standard in their writing and spelling. Therefore, more work needs to be undertaken to improve the competencies of both Arabic teachers and pupils in this aspect. It is hoped that the current findings will encourage a higher priority to be given to dictation with the emphasis on what pupils can do, rather than merely what they know. If we believe that it is essential to know the rules of dictation, we also think that there are valid reasons for confirming the role of the application of these rules and for devoting sufficient time to it.

5.8 Findings Related to Teaching Arabic Calligraphy

It has been shown in Chapter Four, Table 4.18 that twelve of the twenty-two items were rated Very Important and the remaining ten (Table 4.19) Important. The following discussion centres on the items rated Very Important.

5.8.1 Very Important Competencies

It has already been mentioned in different places in Chapter Two that Arabic calligraphy is often neglected, for it is pursued with the minimum of effort by both teachers and pupils. Its pedagogical objectives and priority in the timetable have not been given the same status as that of the other aspects of Arabic. Table 2.1 in Chapter Two shows that only one period a week is allocated for teaching Arabic calligraphy and it alternates with another aspect of dictation. Despite the limitations of the class period allocated to Arabic calligraphy, many teachers use this time to teach other aspects such as reading or grammar.

Further evidence of neglect is apparent in the routine question used in the final examination, which is repeated in both the primary and intermediate schools: "Write the following sentence in *naskh* first and then in *ruq'a*." Normally, the sentence used in the question is a common Arabic proverb (*mathal*) or aphorism (*ḥikma*) such as *al-'aqlu al-salīmu fī al-jismi al-salīmi* [a healthy mind in a healthy body]. All these aspects of the neglect of Arabic calligraphy are emphasized by many writers, among them Ruḥāb (1984: 39–41) and Ahmed (1987: 162–163).

Clearly, although teachers cannot take all the blame for this neglect, neither can they distance themselves from the situation. However, other factors such as the educational authorities, inspectors, curriculum and pupils are also the cause of the

problem. The responsibility for finding a solution should be equally distributed among all these influences. Therefore, the findings, which are described below, represent a partial solution, because they highlight the basic competencies required for the learning/teaching of this aspect of Arabic.

The twelve items which were rated Very Important according to Table 4.18, can be divided into three main groups as follows. The first group is concerned with the competencies that pupils should apply when practising calligraphy. This group is also classified into three sub-groups as follows.

1. Items 1, 3 and 5: knowing the correct way to draw the letters. Firstly, pupils should distinguish between the shapes of the letters, especially those which have a similar outline with only a slight visual difference in the arrangement of the dots. Mitchell (1953: 10) and Beeston (1968: 10) state that there is a number of dots above or below the basic linear form of the Arabic letter and that these dots alone distinguish one letter from another since they are an integral part of the letter. Therefore, differences in the number of dots and their position, as affirmed by Wickens (1980: 14) and Ahmed (1987: 155–156), produce letters having quite different sounds although identical in shape.

The ability to distinguish between letters having a similar outline, therefore, is the basis of knowing how to write correctly these and other letters according to their position in the words and whether they are written separately or joined to other letters. Again Beeston (1968: 10) states that the Arabic script “is a cursive one, in which normally the letters of a single word are linked together by ‘ligatures’.” This means that most of the Arabic letters necessarily

change shape several times, depending upon their position within a written word (Naim, 1971: 116).

2. Items 7 and 10: producing good examples of Arabic script. Mastering the competencies of knowing how to distinguish and draw different Arabic letters means that pupils should apply this knowledge to produce accurate script by using the common types of Arabic calligraphy: *naskh* and *ruq‘a*. For information on these two types, see Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3G. Since the main principles of learning calligraphy, according to Samak (1979: 545), is imitation and practice to improve the competency of drawing letters, the teachers should offer several good examples to achieve this purpose. Samak adds on the same page, that many educational aids can be used here in presenting these examples, such as (a) the calligraphy card (*kurrāsāt al-khaṭṭ*), which is distributed to pupils by the Ministry of Education. These cards are printed with sentences consisting of common Arabic proverbs or aphorisms; (b) cards written by the teacher and distributed to each pupil; and (c) examples written by the teacher on the blackboard or whiteboard.
3. Following the above, whatever aids are used to present the examples, pupils should bear in mind that the one of the aims of practising Arabic calligraphy is to produce clear letters and words. This is because clarity, as ‘Īsā (1992: 81) states, is one of the important purposes of learning/teaching Arabic calligraphy. According to Yūnus et al. (n.d.: 265), clarity of the calligraphy is one of the factors that enable the reader to understand the meanings intended by the writer. In contrast, the badness and ambiguity of the calligraphy are the factors that

provoke the reader into disliking the written work. They also represent an obstacle to communicating the writer's ideas to others.

Clear calligraphy can be achieved by considering several competencies: items 2, 4, 8 and 9 in Table 4.18, which are explained below.

- (a) Following the line for writing letters and words. Qūra (1981: 192) points out that among the aims of practising calligraphy is producing writing that is distinguished by the good structure of its words written in straight lines without any zigzag even if the paper on which the text is written is not lined.
- (b) Bearing in mind the harmony and co-ordination between the position and dimension of letters and words. Ma'rūf (1987: 150) mentions that the clarity of calligraphy is achieved by training pupils to consider the features of each letter in respect of its size, the way in which it is joined to the other letters, its straightness, and the correct positioning of its dots.
- (c) Careful concentration when practising calligraphy. The achievement of the two requirements (a) and (b) depends on (c). This is a reasonable conclusion to draw, since it is known that one of the specific objectives of Arabic calligraphy, as Ahmed (1987: 81) points out, is to train pupils "to become attentive, observant, patient and deliberate." These features are the most likely to enable pupils to master the competencies of calligraphy and thereby discover and appreciate its beauty.

An examination of the first main group indicates weaknesses in most of those competencies, a finding that has been highlighted in many previous studies. Among

those is that carried out by Ruḥāb (1984), which is an evaluation of the competencies of Arabic calligraphy in Egypt. The findings of this study indicate (p. 136) that these weaknesses are: (1) not following the line while writing; (2) lack of harmony and coordination between letters and words; (3) not distinguishing between letters, particularly those which have a similar outline; and (4) not bearing in mind the clarity of calligraphy. It can be concluded, therefore, that more work is needed to improve pupils' performance in this linguistic aspect.

The second main group of Very Important competencies comprises items 6 and 12 in Table 4.18: the discovery and correction of errors. The discussion of the first group shows that in mastering Arabic calligraphy, attention needs to be given to many vital competencies beginning with distinguishing between the letters and ending with the desired objective of clear calligraphy. This means that the neglect by teachers and pupils of the competencies that should be applied when practising calligraphy most probably leads to all kinds of errors. Therefore, one of the teacher's duties is to help his pupils to reduce the incidence of these errors.

Unlike other linguistic aspects, calligraphy needs a large amount of practice, which requires great effort on the part of the pupils. Lest this effort be wasted, it is essential that teachers provide their pupils with feedback. Sullivan & Higgins (1983: 46) state "knowledge of results, or feedback as it is often called, is information given to student about the correctness of their responses. Research indicates that knowledge of results is often effective in helping students learn."

Clearly, it is essential that pupils' errors are corrected. Evidence has shown that, as 'Īsā (1992: 84) states, it is better that pupils write a small amount of text

correctly than a large amount containing numerous errors. Accordingly, there are two ways in which the teachers can correct pupils' errors according to 'Īsā (1992: 112): (1) individual evaluation where the teacher corrects the errors of each pupil; and (2) collective evaluation where the teacher focuses on common errors which are made by most of the pupils. The task of correction enables teachers to discover those pupils who have a talent for calligraphy, which leads to the third – and closely related – group of competencies.

The third main group of competencies comprises item 11 in Table 4.18: developing the inclination of pupils to practise Arabic calligraphy. The importance of mastering the competencies of Arabic calligraphy to produce clear writing is perhaps a strong motive for pupils to practise it frequently. The beauty of calligraphy is also a sound reason for practising it since, as Samak (1979: 543–544) points out, calligraphy is not merely a linguistic means or aspect, it also promotes the appreciation of artistic beauty as do other fine arts such as sculpture and painting. The artistic value of Arabic calligraphy has been explained in detail in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3G. Therefore, it was to be expected that some of the respondents to the questionnaire would suggest that Arabic calligraphy should be taught by the art teacher instead of the Arabic teacher.

A suitable conclusion to the discussion of the findings of Arabic calligraphy is a brief look at the relationship between this and other written aspects, which are written composition and dictation. 'Īsā (1992: 110) points out that written language consists of three topics: (1) Calligraphy, which comprises drawing the letters with attention given to their specific shapes to avoid confusion between them. (2)

Dictation, which requires words to be written according to certain rules. (3) Written composition, in which the words are written according to a particular arrangement of sentences and paragraphs so as to convey ideas in a logical train of thought.

‘Īsā’s statement shows that each of the linguistic aspects complements the others. Therefore, teachers should give their pupils training in all these aspects at the same time without concentrating on a particular one at the expense of the others. This approach, in fact, enhances the integration of the language, which is discussed in some detail in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.1.

5.9 Additional Suggested Linguistic Competencies

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to add any linguistic competencies in each aspect of teaching Arabic which they had experienced and which had not been included. A number of competencies that had been added were either a repetition of original items included in the questionnaire or unrelated to the topic of Arabic teaching. Therefore, these competencies and suggestions were ignored. The remainder, which are presented below, were found to be relevant and useful. This topic is then divided into two main categories:

1. Additional competencies that were classified according to only four aspects of teaching Arabic, since no new items were suggested for the remaining four aspects, that is, oral and written composition, grammar and dictation.
2. General suggestions regarding the teaching of Arabic.

The rest of the discussion in this chapter is devoted to examining the importance of these new items and suggestions.

5.9.1 Additional Competencies Related to Four Aspects of Teaching

5.9.1.1 Teaching Listening

Three items were found to be relevant to this aspect as follows:

1. Using suitable aids such as tapes to make the listening text clearer and more interesting.
2. Asking pupils appropriate questions that measure their understanding of the text for listening.
3. Advising pupils on the importance of listening to television and radio programmes that use modern standard Arabic to improve their language.

It is clear that the above items focus on two points. The use of suitable aids by both teachers and pupils is advised. The importance of using these aids is their ability to produce a realistic sound (Dunkel, 1986: 101). In addition, the advantages of using them are: (1) teachers or pupils can stop where they wish and replay any section as often as necessary; and (2) pupils can work on their own, either in or outside the classroom (Rixon, 1986: 11). To improve the standard of the pupils' language, there are today a large number of programmes broadcast on radio and television, as well as video recordings which use modern standard Arabic. Examples are documentary and language programmes, historical films and news.

Although using suitable aids is very important to make the lesson easier and more interesting, unfortunately, there are a number of teachers who do not use such aids in their classes. There are several possible reasons for this situation. First, there is a very limited amount of teaching material available in the schools. For instance,

only one tape-recorder is available in each school for all the Arabic teachers. Second, some teachers lack classroom control, which means that only a few pupils listen to the material when it is played in the class. Third, some teachers do not know how and when to introduce these materials, since they do not include their use when planning the lesson. Fourth, the aspect of teaching listening, as already stated in several places in this study, has been neglected in the curriculum. Therefore, the teachers have also neglected to include it and so they do not use the teaching facilities to improve the competencies of their pupils in this aspect.

The second of the additional competencies is asking pupils appropriate questions that measure their understanding of the listening text. Al-Rabiey (1995: 100) points out that "the main aim of a teacher's questions is to increase students' involvement and to enhance their understanding during the process of teaching." According to his study, the effective teachers ask thought-provoking questions such as "do you think, what do you think, can you guess?" These teachers also use questions as a basis for constructive discussion (ibid.: 100). With regard to measuring listening comprehension, Powers (1986: 23) has also found that "answering questions involving recall of details and those involving inferences and deductions were viewed as somewhat more appropriate than were the other tasks."

From the above observations, it seems that the simple and surface questions are not enough for measuring the pupils' understanding of the listening text. Perhaps this is because such questions do not usually encourage them to participate in the classroom activities.

5.9.1.2 Teaching Reading

Three competencies were found in this aspect as follows:

1. Studying the lesson or the text at home before coming to the class.
2. Performing some plays in the classroom or the school theatre.
3. Motivating and encouraging pupils to read useful stories to increase their linguistic repertoire and to develop their competencies of reading.

It could be said from the above that the first item is addressed to the teacher and the pupils, since it is very important for both to study the text at home before coming to the class.

In the case of the teachers, al-Rabiey (1995: 22) states that planning the lesson is considered one factor of a teacher's competencies, since it helps him to predetermine the requirements for the lesson. Teachers are thus enabled to facilitate learning by preparing suitable materials and finding ways in which to make the lesson interesting and simple for the pupils (ibid.: 23). Aḥmad (1979: 20) states that teachers should consult many references and sources for their lessons to enhance their knowledge, since a deficiency in this area could lead to a loss of confidence in front of their pupils. Nevertheless, a number of Arabic teachers do not give enough attention to preparing their lessons. They use only the pupils' textbook and the teachers' manual. As a result, they do not consult other sources for a better understanding and analysis of the topic. This state of affairs is highlighted by Shaḥāta (1993: 127) and al-Hashmi (2001: 148).

It should be emphasized here that today the most important and easiest way to find information useful for teaching purposes is the Internet. There are a large number of websites aimed at the teaching of Arabic, where teachers can find useful articles, new books and journals. Unfortunately, until now most of the schools in Oman have not had any computers, let alone access to the Internet, apart from some private schools.

It is also essential that the pupils study the text at home before coming to the class. Again Shaḥāta (1993: 127–128) states that pre-identifying the text for pupils before studying it in the class encourages them to read it at home and this trains them to be independent and develop self-confidence. It also helps them to participate in the class discussion. However, as has already been stated in this chapter, there is a lack of the additional reference books needed by the pupils for further study and the preparation of the lessons. In addition, there are very few pupils who have their own computers and access to the Internet in their homes to gather useful information.

The remaining three items related to additional competencies focus on motivating and encouraging pupils to improve their competencies of reading and increase their linguistic repertoire. According to the respondents, this can be done in two ways as follows.

First, performing plays in the classroom or in the school theatre. Liu (2000: 360) points out that among the benefits of readers' theatre (RT) are: (1) encouraging pupils to participate; (2) developing attentiveness; (3) helping teachers avoid bias towards pupils; and (4) creating a more interesting and interactive way of making pupils think and reflect. Furthermore, Lazar (1993: 137) states: "since most plays are rich in dialogue, using a play with students is a useful and exciting way of

focusing on conversational language.” The reason for this, he adds (p. 138), is that “studying the dialogue of a play provides students with a meaningful context for acquiring and memorising new language. Students often pick up new phrases or formulaic expressions by studying how these are used by the characters in a play, particularly if the text is read or performed.”

Clearly, performing a play in the school has a useful role in improving the pupils’ language. However, Liu (2000: 354) emphasizes that literature in this area for application to the language class is still scarce and “language teachers sometimes feel intimidated in using this technique due to their lack of artistic training in theatre and/or their concern about the physical constraints of the classroom.” He adds (p. 360), that to substantiate the role of theatrical activities, we need to combine the efforts of teachers and researchers in designing and implementing more classroom activities.

Another way of improving pupils’ language is reading useful stories. Pittman (1967: 179) points out that “as language is so wide, and our time to teach it in school is so limited, we need some help to the pupil’s English during the hours when he is not at school.” He adds that we should therefore give our pupils some help and encouragement in reading. We should then introduce them to additional interesting references, not textbooks, but stories. One of the advantages of reading stories is that they can be read quickly (ibid: 180). Furthermore, pupils can use stories to increase their vocabulary by keeping notebooks in which they copy new words or words that they wish to remember.

5.9.1.3 Teaching Literary Texts

Three competencies were found in this aspect as follows:

1. Choosing unabridged literary texts to present their ideas and meaning as a whole and in logical sequence.
2. Choosing texts that deal with contemporary issues.
3. Developing the talents of suitably capable pupils to recite poetry or produce literary writing.

Items 1 and 2 above focus on the same topic, that is, choosing the literary texts. It has already been mentioned that Lazar (1993: 15) states that if the materials are carefully chosen, pupils will feel that what they study in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives. Similarly, Pattison (1965: 290) points out that literature has a role to play in personal development and social adjustment. Therefore, to make it interesting and to achieve progress in reading, its material must be selected carefully.

Consequently, one of the purposes of teaching literary texts is encouraging the acquisition of language. In the light of this purpose, the literary text contains a group of vocabularies, grammar patterns, figures of speech and a range of styles. It is also very rich in multiple levels of meanings: both obvious and implicit. Therefore, to help pupils acquire these linguistic aspects, it is necessary to choose unabridged literary texts which present ideas and meanings as a whole and in logical sequence.

Furthermore, among the criteria for selecting texts is their relevance to contemporary issues. It is “true that texts which may appear to be very remote in time and place from the world today may still have appeal for students in different countries around the world” (Lazar, 1993: 53). However, it is very important also for the teaching of literary texts to deal with new issues. Examples are the problem of Palestine, other regions of the Arab and Muslim worlds, and the issues of poverty and crime around the world. Pupils today come across all these issues in the various media and their appearance in the literary texts induces pupils to feel that the textbooks are very relevant to their own lives. This situation strongly encourages pupils to like studying literary texts.

Item 3 focuses on the role of teachers to encourage the pupils to exercise their talents in reciting poetry or producing literary or creative writing. Although reading literature with interest and pleasure should be within everybody’s reach, for talented pupils this aim is not enough. When they read a great deal of literature, a strong interest is developed, which encourages them to imitate samples of literary texts. The teachers, therefore, should make sufficient effort to satisfy their pupils in this area and help them to become poets or writers. Encouraging such pupils to participate in literary clubs and attend some literary activities in society can achieve this purpose. The importance of this step come from the fact that a number of pupils leave schools only half educated and may have literary talents. The duty of teachers here is to discover these talents so as to improve them before the pupils leave school.

5.9.1.4 Teaching Arabic Calligraphy

Only one new item was found for this aspect: provision of a training programme for the teaching of Arabic calligraphy, since this aspect requires a specialist. Some

respondents suggested that Arabic calligraphy should be taught by the art teacher rather than the Arabic teacher.

It has already been mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3G, and in the present chapter, section 5.8, that although Arabic calligraphy is one of the linguistic aspects which is concerned with forming letters correctly, it also has an aesthetic and artistic significance. It has been used, for example, to decorate mosques, monuments, ceramics and so on. Therefore, to preserve the aesthetic role of Arabic calligraphy, it is vital that pupils are trained in mastering its competencies. In so doing, Arabic teachers should provide a good example of the clarity and beauty of their calligraphy and writing.

Unfortunately, the teaching of this aspect today, as Ruḥāb (1984: 40) emphasizes, is entrusted to a group of teachers who have neither a full knowledge of the subject nor experience in teaching it, so how can they set a good example to their pupils? Perhaps that is why some of the respondents suggested that the Arabic calligraphy should be taught by the art teacher instead of the Arabic teacher. This point of view might have expressed their awareness of their weakness in this aspect or the ambiguity and illegibility of their pupils' written work.

I tend to agree with this view, although I should like to explain some points. The first is that it has already been stated in section 5.8 that calligraphy entails mastering its competencies, such as the correct way of forming the letters and the ability to distinguish between them. This means that a teacher who trains pupils in this area must have this basic knowledge even if he is a teacher of art.

Secondly, there is the possibility of a situation where the art teacher, who has such knowledge, is not available. In this case the responsibility of training pupils in Arabic calligraphy could be shared between the Arabic teacher, who teaches pupils the theoretical knowledge, and the art teacher, who teaches the practical side of the subject. This is because the practice area needs a studio and materials which may not be available to the Arabic teacher. Achieving this level of co-operation enhances the view of the integration between linguistic aspects and other school subjects and also between Arabic teachers and teachers of other subjects.

5.9.2 General Suggestions Related to the Teaching of Arabic

A number of respondents made various suggestions and comments to help teachers of Arabic improve their competencies and qualities. This in turn would increase their professional effectiveness to the standard needed to enable their pupils to achieve the linguistic objectives defined by the Ministry of Education in Oman, as described in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3 and to master the linguistic competencies discussed in the current chapter. In addition, the purpose of these suggestions was to improve the methods of teaching Arabic so as to overcome the difficulties that face teachers daily in the classroom. Furthermore, these suggestions seem to express the respondents' view of the general current status of Arabic teaching in Oman from the perspective of teacher-training programmes, which were covered in detail in section 3 of Chapter Two. The suggestions can be summarized as follows:

1. Giving attention to the teaching of listening, dictation and Arabic calligraphy by the ample provision of relevant pre- and in-service training sessions, an area which to date has been neglected, and by emphasizing the importance of these aspects in the Arabic curriculum.

2. Reviewing the programmes of pre-service training of Arabic teachers and reviewing the criteria for the selection of candidates for the teaching profession.
3. Benefiting from modern educational media or teaching aids in teaching Arabic and reducing the reliance on the traditional methods.
4. Improving school libraries and providing them with useful books to encourage pupils' self-learning.
5. Allocating a number of periods weekly to free reading in the school library or establishing a classroom library.

To discuss these general suggestions, it is helpful to divide them into three categories according to their topic as follows. The first category comprises items 1 and 2, since they describe the current status of teaching some linguistic aspects in Oman, as well as pre- and in-service teacher-training. In fact, these suggestions emphasize what has been already mentioned about the neglect of listening, dictation and Arabic calligraphy. In Chapter Two, section 2.3.2.3.3, and also in the current chapter, we have presented the aspects of this neglect as follows: (1) In the teacher-training programmes for Arabic teachers, these three linguistic aspects have not been given the same status as that of the other aspects, particularly on the practical side; (2) the Arabic curriculum has allocated very few class periods to their study in the weekly timetable; and (3) although their classroom visits are few, inspectors of Arabic concentrate their attention on the reading and grammar aspects. As a result, both teachers and pupils tend to neglect the three linguistic aspects.

The pedagogical importance of the previous suggestions and the necessity of giving them greater attention perhaps stem from the fact that many of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire had graduated from colleges of education in Oman and therefore had experience of the weaknesses in the programmes that they had followed during their pre-service training. Therefore, these teachers hope that their suggestions will be taken into consideration in the planning of future teacher-training programmes. This result then shows that there is a close correlation between it and what has been discussed in previous sections in this chapter about competencies that were rated Very Important. It also supports our view – stated earlier – that teacher-training requires a very large investment of time and effort.

The second category of the general suggestions is concerned with topics of the educational method, as shown in item 3. The respondents suggest that Arabic teachers should take advantage of the modern media, and thereby reduce their reliance on the traditional methods. The value of these suggestions relates to the discussion in Chapter One, section 1.1.4 of the reasons for the growth of the teaching competencies movement. There it is stated that this movement originated as a reaction to the traditional teacher-training, which was concerned more with the theoretical than the practical aspects and remote from the interests of the pupils.

In traditional education the traditional method is generally used. It is known as the *telling method*, *receptivity method* or the *teacher-centred method*. Some of its characteristics are as follows: (1) it concentrates on memorization; and (2) the teacher is a sender and the pupil is a receiver. As a result, it is unsuitable for training

pupils to be capable of taking part in a discussion, giving their opinion and participating in other classroom activities.

Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the methods used in Arabic teaching should be reviewed, since the main concern in any kind of teaching is the pupils and their success in learning. It should be mentioned here, however, that the above comments are not meant to imply that the traditional method is completely wrong. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that this method has serious defects which make it unsuitable for use nowadays, for it does not cater for the variety of mental processes required in modern learning.

The last category comprises items 4 and 5: improving school libraries by providing them with useful references to enable pupils to benefit from them. There seems to be a strong connection between these suggestions and those related to the traditional method examined above.

Earlier in this chapter, section 5.2.1, it has been mentioned that the current situation of teaching reading in Oman shows that pupils are not encouraged to use supplemental books. Several reasons have been stated, one of which was that school libraries suffer from a lack of reference material. Many of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire realized that if they were to help their pupils develop a wide-ranging ability to make practical use of the linguistic competencies, a number of facilities should be available in the school. So far, these facilities in most of the schools in Oman, as previously mentioned, have been very limited.

5.10 Conclusion

From the discussion in this chapter about the findings of the questionnaire on linguistic competencies required for teaching Arabic, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, there is the general view among the respondents that nearly all the competencies mentioned in this chapter are more important than others which were rated from Moderately Important to Important, as shown in the tables of Chapter Four. This result may reflect the respondents' awareness of the significant role of the competencies for improving the teaching of Arabic not only in the classroom, but also in training programmes and curriculum planning. The importance of these competencies could also stem from their role in facilitating the teaching/learning of language. Perhaps this is because the teaching of any language is difficult since, as Pittman (1967: 2) points out, "all languages consist of a complicated series of skills for their speakers, listeners, readers and writers."

Clearly, if we want teachers to be effective in enabling their pupils to receive, understand and apply the substance of their linguistic lessons and achieve most, if not all, of the major objectives required of their teaching, the teachers themselves should have the relevant competencies to train their pupils in specific linguistic competencies which need regular practice in increasing difficulty to bring about improvement.

However, it should be noticed on one hand that the importance of these competencies does not omit the role of other competencies. On the other hand, the Very Important competencies are treated as a guide for teachers rather than a means

of locking them into a cage from which they could not escape if they wished. It means that the teacher should be aware of the needs of his pupils, since their needs vary from time to time according to the developments that have taken place in their lives. Therefore, the teacher can decide clearly what his pupils have already learned and what they need to learn.

Secondly, all the competencies related to each linguistic aspect described in this chapter seem to be interrelated and interact with each other. This means that the strength of one competency seems to have a positive effect on the performance of another. Moreover, the interrelationship between competencies produces the integration of all linguistic aspects. This can be explained, for example, by the following competency that was rated Very Important in several linguistic aspects. It is the competency of “distinguishing the pronunciation and formation of the letters, especially those which have a similar outline and are close to one another”. It is clear that this competency can be found in reading, oral and written composition, dictation and calligraphy.

Thirdly, the observation of the findings shows also that they cover all three domains of competencies: cognitive, psychomotor and affective. This result avoids the weaknesses found in traditional education, which focuses on the cognitive domain more than the others. The findings were then used to highlight the value of each domain. To explain this point: (1) the cognitive represents mostly the theoretical aspect, which pertains to knowledge; (2) the psychomotor represents the practical aspect of this knowledge, particularly that which need physical skills such as writing, reading, speaking, class or non-class activities, and so on; and (3) the

affective represents tendencies and interests, which are very important in achieving the former two domains.

Fourthly, several reasons were given to explain why nine competencies were perceived to be least important (Moderately Important):

1. To achieve those competencies, a high level of thinking is required, which is beyond the level of pupils at intermediate school. An example of such competencies is those related to literary texts, which comprise the criticism of the text, knowledge of the trends in Arabic literature, and identification of the metre and the rhyme (see section 5.3.2).
2. Many Arabic teachers lack experience in teaching and in providing their pupils with specific competencies, particularly those which are acquired with practice. This is sometimes due to the deficiencies in their pre-service teacher-training. As a result, teachers try to ignore or avoid these competencies in their teaching duties.

Fifthly, the findings also show that the curriculum for teaching Arabic does not give enough attention to some linguistic aspects such as listening and Arabic calligraphy despite their significant role in improving pupils' language. Those aspects are neglected in the following ways: (1) few class periods are allocated to them weekly; (2) they are taught as part of other linguistic aspects; and (3) they are allotted the lowest proportion of marks in the final examination. This situation, therefore, allows the educational authorities to neglect the provision of teaching/learning facilities and materials that enhance the study of these aspects of

Arabic. The respondents to the questionnaire feel that the above aspects should be given adequate consideration.

Finally, there were a number of additional suggested competencies. Some of them were related particularly to the four aspects of teaching Arabic. Another group expressed in general the respondents' views of the status of teaching Arabic, the position of Arabic in the school curriculum, and the teacher-training programmes in Oman. Those suggestions were found to be very useful in helping teachers and pupils to improve their linguistic competencies.

Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations

The main purpose of this final part of the thesis is to summarize the issues and findings, and suggest some improvements to the current system of teaching Arabic at the intermediate stage in Oman. The chapter ends with some recommendations that could be useful in planning teacher-training programmes in the future, with particular reference to teaching the linguistic competencies, and in encouraging further studies in this field.

1. General Conclusion

Since the success of language teaching depends largely on the ability of the teachers, the issue of their competencies, as shown in Chapter One, has received widespread attention in recent years. Some researchers have investigated educational competencies, while others have focused on linguistic competencies in general. However, there are very few studies covering the competencies required for intermediate school teachers of Arabic in the Arab world, especially in Oman.

So far, there has been only one document published by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1999, describing the linguistic competencies necessary for teachers of the first stage of basic education in Oman. A close look at its constituents has shown that these competencies were very general, very limited and lacking any precise definition. Al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001) recently conducted a study to identify the educational and linguistic competencies required for Arabic teachers, which was to be used as a basis for evaluating the performance of female teachers in the first cycle of basic education in Oman. His results have shown that there has been a weakness in the

teachers' practice of the speaking and reading competencies. Although al-Ḥarrāṣī's study is recent and close to the present study, the linguistic competencies covered are very limited and simple, for they are linked with the educational competencies and confined to the first cycle of basic education.

Clearly, studies dealing with the linguistic competencies in Oman in general, let alone at the intermediate state, are very rare. That is why it was considered necessary to conduct a pilot study in Oman for the present thesis. It must be emphasized that there is an urgent need for a full study which identifies in detail all the linguistic competencies needed for teachers of Arabic in Oman and measures the level at which they are mastered. It has also shown that the standard of Arabic teachers was unsatisfactory (for the pilot study, see the Introduction of this thesis).

Therefore, the possession of the linguistic competencies would be of great help to the Arabic teacher, for it would improve his ability in the classroom. It is expected, then, that he should familiarize himself with at least the very important competencies required for teaching Arabic. This means that teacher-training should be based on the acquisition of the relevant competencies.

The significance of the movement of competency-based teacher-training, which has been explained in detail in Chapter One, has led to the examination of the current status of pre- and in-service teacher-training in Oman. It has been found that the main defects in the teacher-training programmes are (1) adherence to the traditional methods such as lectures that are far removed from classroom practice; (2) dependency on personal experience in the planning of the programmes; and (3) the

large number of Arabic teachers enrolled at colleges of education against their wishes.

This situation has produced undesirable results, which means that today there are still some teachers who lack experience and competency in teaching or who suffer from certain weaknesses in their specialization. This suggests that fundamental reforms in pre- and in-service teacher-training in Oman are still needed to produce enough qualified teachers of not only Arabic but also other school subjects. Many Omani researchers have emphasized this fact, among the recent examples of whom are al-Barawani and Ibrahim (1997), al-Hinai (1997), al-Ḥarrāṣī (2001), al-Hashmi (2001), al-Manthri (2001) and al-Salmi (2001).

In direct response to the concerns raised about the lack of linguistic competencies in the teaching of Arabic, efforts were made to identify which were required by compiling an appropriate questionnaire. The final draft included linguistic competencies related to eight aspects of the teaching of Arabic: Listening, Reading, Literary Texts, Oral Composition, Written Composition, Grammar, Dictation, and Arabic Calligraphy. This list was compiled as the result of consulting various sources, as described in Chapter One and Chapter Three. The most important of these sources, which has been examined in full detail in Chapter Two, is the analysis of general, specific and behavioural objectives of teaching Arabic in Oman. The analysis is based on a survey of the Arabic language syllabus and the Arabic teachers' manuals provided by the Ministry of Education. The objectives stated were the mastery of multiple competencies in cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains.

The discussion of these objectives in Chapter Two has revealed that certain difficulties are inherent in their statements. Most of the general objectives are broad, idealistic, largely inspirational, vague and allow a variety of interpretations. It is difficult to work towards them in practice since there is the problem of translating them into meaningful behavioural objectives. Even specific objectives are beyond observation and measurement since each comprises a number of smaller objectives. This means that to use such objectives pedagogically, several behavioural objectives need to be translated for each of them.

When examining the behavioural objectives related to the various aspects of teaching Arabic, it has been found that the amount of attention devoted to them has varied from one linguistic aspect to another. For example, more attention has been given to the objectives of reading and grammar since they are the usual focus of instruction. In contrast, the behavioural objectives of teaching listening, dictation and Arabic calligraphy received much less attention. Perhaps that is because, in the view of many experts and teachers, these three aspects are presumed to develop naturally without the need for rigorous systematic instruction. They think that listening can be developed naturally while teaching reading, and dictation and calligraphy will be learnt from written composition.

There are, in addition, various reasons for the neglect of the objectives related to these aspects, which leads to the neglect by both teachers and pupils of the aspects themselves. The following are some examples:

1. The imbalance of time allocated weekly to aspects of Arabic. Table 2.1 in Chapter Two shows that there are no class periods devoted to teaching listening. Dictation and Arabic calligraphy share only one class period weekly.
2. In dictation, there is greater emphasis on the rules themselves instead of putting them into practice. Pupils are also introduced to difficult words such as *hamza* and the soft alif (*al-alif al-layyina*). This results in the pupils coming to dislike dictation.
3. The lack of pupils' textbooks whose content includes these aspects of Arabic, for they usually consist of only reading and grammar. There is also a lack of teachers' manuals, particularly for listening and dictation. This results in the misunderstanding by both teachers and pupils of the natural value of teaching these aspects.
4. The separate treatment of each aspect which disorganizes the integration of all the aspects of Arabic. This approach could be the result of a misunderstanding that the aim of the division into aspects is merely to facilitate the teaching of the language.
5. The lack of educational facilities required for mastering competencies of these aspects of Arabic, such as tape-recorders, language laboratories, televisions, and, in particular, a studio and equipment for Arabic calligraphy.
6. The lack of co-operation between teachers of Arabic and those of other subjects. It has been stated that Arabic teachers are weak in their level of linguistic competencies. From this, one can conclude that such a weakness must be even

greater among teachers of other subjects, who are consequently unable to improve their pupils' language.

Another major source of linguistic competencies for inclusion in the questionnaire was a review of the relevant literature. This entailed a survey of the results of earlier studies containing lists of these competencies as well as books on curriculum and methodology of teaching language.

An analysis of the general characteristics of language and specific characteristics of the Arabic language was also considered a source. Here, the features of language were translated into linguistic competencies so as to incorporate the linguistic field into the educational arena.

All these sources were found to be most valuable in gathering information for compiling the questionnaire. After the analysis of the sources was completed, the questionnaire was compiled with its items (231 competencies) divided into the eight aspects of teaching Arabic. The procedures followed to implement the questionnaire have been fully described in Chapter Three. The findings from the questionnaire have been presented and analysed statistically in Chapter Four. The findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

It has been mentioned above that in establishing training or remedial programmes for teachers, it is also necessary to assess the extent to which teachers possess certain competencies. To accomplish this, an appropriate instrument needs to be developed. This coincides with another aim of the present study, which is the creation of a specific observation card. The need for such an instrument has been the

result of the pilot study described above, which highlighted the lack of a card designed to evaluate Arabic teachers in particular. All that is available is an observation card focusing on educational competencies in general for use by the inspectors of all the school subjects, regardless of the nature of an individual subject.

The main source of establishing the observation card was those findings from the questionnaire which were rated very important. The findings covered two aspects of Arabic: Reading and Grammar. It should be mentioned here that it has not been within the scope of this study to put the proposed observation card into practice. At this stage it was designed as a suggestion and an example that could be used in the future by inspectors to evaluate their teachers.

To sum up, the main points of the findings of the present study are as follows. Firstly, the realistic and practical value of the findings is based on the fact that most of the respondents were Arabic teachers, who numbered 173 or 69.2 per cent of the total of 250. The reason is that teachers deal directly with pupils when implementing the curriculum and are expected to know their linguistic level and which competencies they need to acquire. The teachers also know more than anyone else their own areas of weakness and can therefore decide which competencies they need to master.

Arabic inspectors have also played a significant role in the findings of this study, since they numbered 70 or 28 per cent. This group of educators have a particular educational experience as a result of their close and direct contact with the teachers. Although the experts in Arabic curriculum development have varied

experience as well, it is based on theoretical aspects because their connection with field work is very rare. Their proportion was therefore only 2.8 per cent.

Secondly, the analysis of competencies in terms of importance has shown that the majority of items in all the aspects included in the questionnaire were rated important and very important, with only nine out of two hundred and thirty-one being rated moderately important. This result expresses the view of the respondents that these competencies have a significant role in teaching Arabic. However, despite the importance of many competencies, respondents may believe that they have not mastered them to the desired level.

Thirdly, it could not be expected that all linguistic competencies would be rated very important in the findings. Perhaps the respondents realized that the main purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the very important competencies required for teaching Arabic. From their experience, they know that each class period is set at around forty minutes, so it would be impossible to teach the pupils all the necessary competencies. In this context, many teachers report that there is simply not enough time to do everything that they would like to do in the classroom. Therefore, in their responses to the questionnaire they have tried to focus on the essential competencies that enable their pupils to master the basics of the Arabic language.

However, this result does not mean the other competencies that are not rated very important are not required for teaching Arabic. On the contrary, it is essential for teachers to acquire them, for they are expected to be more fully informed than their pupils. In addition, the position of teachers in the field of education demands

that they improve their competencies and update their knowledge. Their promotion from one educational stage to the next, such as from an intermediate to a secondary school, or to the position of inspector of education or member of the department of curriculum development and methodology would require a higher level of competencies.

Although those competencies not rated very important may be unsuitable for some pupils at a particular stage because of their level of difficulty, they may be suitable for others who can learn faster. However, to make use of the limited lesson time, teachers could guide those pupils to master these competencies in non-class activities. Unfortunately, many teachers are unaware of these activities and have no idea how to guide their pupils towards them and thus benefit from their free time, particularly during the summer holidays.

Fourthly, the analysis of the questionnaire has shown that a number of respondents were interested in giving more than their responses to the questions. They suggested other linguistic competencies and added important and useful opinions on the area of the present study. They probably found that the questionnaire provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the weaknesses in the system of teaching Arabic in Oman.

Some of these suggestions were directly related to four aspects of teaching Arabic: Listening, Reading, Literary Texts, and Arabic Calligraphy. Another group of suggestions expressed the views of the respondents (teachers in particular) concerning the general status of the teaching of Arabic in Oman. They stated that fundamental reforms were essential in several areas as follows: giving greater

attention to the aspects of Arabic which have been neglected; reducing the reliance on the traditional methods of teaching; enhancing the co-ordination between teachers of Arabic and those of other subjects; and reviewing the pre-service teacher-training programmes. These opinions have been discussed in full detail in Chapter Five.

2. Suggestions

It is widely acknowledged that the teacher is the main key to a successful educational system in any community. Therefore, to raise the status of the teaching profession, teachers need to refresh and update their competencies in the light of the latest developments in their field. As far as the linguistic competencies are concerned in this study, the findings from the questionnaire and the issues discussed in the previous chapters have produced a number of relevant suggestions as listed below. The aim of these suggestions is to present an opinion of how to improve the standard of teaching linguistic competencies.

1. The lesson time allocated each week should be carefully balanced between the linguistic aspects, their content, theory and practice. Without this condition, teachers may well be tempted to neglect some aspects for one reason or another. The importance of achieving a balance between theoretical and practical aspects, for example, is emphasized by Suleiman (1993: 84), who stated that

the good curriculum is thought to be one which strikes a balance between traditional values and a modern and forward-looking perspective, as well as between the mental development of the students on the one hand, and their motor and physical development on the other. In this latter respect, the good curriculum should be designed to give expression to the Arab maxim that sound minds are to be found in sound bodies (*al- 'aqlu al-salīmu fī al-jismi al-salīmi*).

2. To avoid the neglect of some aspects of Arabic such as dictation and calligraphy, teachers' manuals and textbooks should be provided. The teachers' manuals should be improved to include an explanation of how to teach Arabic according to the new methodology, using new materials and a new content. The availability of the materials could help to improve the status of teaching these aspects and to enrich the teaching itself, as described by Ellis & Friel (2001: 362): "Handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and grammar have always been important and feature in school policy documents and teacher's planning. Many schools have coordinated programmes for teaching these aspects, frequently using commercial schemes to ensure coherence across stages."
3. The integration of the language should remain the basic aim of teaching all aspects by giving them the appropriate treatment and introducing them in their natural order of development: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, this does not mean that these aspects exist in isolation, for they need to be integrated into language activities such as listening and interpreting simultaneously, reading and taking notes and so on. This method could be considered a means to facilitate the teaching of Arabic by dealing with all aspects as one entity. The isolation of a competency should, on the one hand, be reserved for particular attention and practice. On the other hand, such practice should not be regarded as an end in itself, but as a means to master the competencies required for each aspect. The results showed a largely significant correlation among the competencies that were considered. For example, the competency related to distinguishing between letters was rated very important in several aspects of Arabic: see Chapters Four and Five.

4. The school linguistic activities should be varied to suit the type of teaching. The task of the teachers is therefore to draw on the range of insights available, and then to develop activities that are appropriate for their pupils. Here, teachers are expected to play several roles so as to encourage their pupils to take part in these activities, both individually and collectively. For example, they could become advisers, organizers, classroom managers, resource providers, and collaborators. Among the purposes of these activities are: using language correctly in real life; solving some personal problems such as shyness, confusion and isolation; discovering individual talents; providing pupils with the confidence to relate to the people around them; improving their attitude to learning; organizing and directing their own learning; and developing their autonomy. Activities could include school broadcast, school newspaper, group discussion, drama, literary group, correspondence or communication group, Arabic calligraphy group, and a group of library friends.
5. Teachers should encourage their pupils as far as possible to use their free time in non-class activities aimed at improving their language. The desired result of this type of activity is to help pupils become an integral part of their community. Examples are: lectures and seminars; group trips; interviews; free reading; accessing information on the Internet; participating in social events like poetry evenings, public speaking, and joining the summer holiday clubs.
6. Co-operation between the teachers of Arabic and those of other subjects should remain the basic aim. In this regard, Gurrey (1959: 206) states that the teacher of language “is not working in isolation with a subject that has far different aims

from those of the other school subjects: the aims of all are concerned with the child, to help him and to give him the best.” The evidence for the necessity and significance of co-operation has been found in the results of the questionnaire, where some respondents, for example, have suggested that Arabic calligraphy should be taught by the art teacher rather than by the Arabic teacher.

7. It is very important for Arabic teachers at all educational stages to use the Internet as a modern method of teaching and obtaining useful information in developing their careers. With regard to the general usefulness of the Internet, al-Naamany (1997: 234) points out:

The Web is now considered as the largest single source of information in comparison to any library in the world and its availability to all gives information accessibility unrivaled in history of mankind. The advent of student Internet Know-how will enable a new era of teaching methods, distribution of information and hence knowledge.

Concerning the more specific use of the Internet in education, al-Hamdani (1997: 184) states:

Basic education school teachers who will be responsible for implementing the educational reform in their school must have skills, practices, and training in the use of information technology. The use of communication will promote a good connection with each other, with the trainers at the training center, and possibly with other teachers across the nation and the world.

This type of service should therefore be available in schools. Furthermore, the curriculum for this topic should be introduced in both pre- and in-service training programmes.

8. Libraries should stock the latest publications that are useful for teaching, such as educational periodicals to supplement the curriculum. Teachers can use them as a source of stimulating ideas and practical examples. Moreover, pupils should also be taught library skills, particularly accessing references.
9. Special workshops and seminars in the colleges of education should be held regularly for teachers to meet college staff and specialists in curriculum and methodology to discuss new problems arising in teaching and to be provided with the latest necessary information. These meetings could also be arranged at the schools between the teachers themselves to debate the teaching of language, thereby encouraging newly qualified teachers to benefit from the guidance of those who are more experienced.
10. The development and delivery of a range of specialized in-service training programmes for Arabic teachers to meet the particular requirements of the reform plan. In fact, it is necessary to review repeatedly related programmes in the light of new research findings to keep pace with the rapid progress in this field and abandon the traditional methods of teaching.
11. The findings from the questionnaire have shown that more emphasis should be placed on the mastery of competencies in any future revision of the teacher-training programmes at the colleges of education according to the general educational reform policy in Oman. The revision should cover various aspects such as aims, content, teaching and learning strategies.
12. It is the purpose of this study to suggest some possible functions of linguistic competencies and recommend them to teachers and pupils in particular. The

findings from the questionnaire have shown that there is indeed a list of competencies that can be provided to educators and teachers at the intermediate stage in Oman. It is hoped that these linguistic competencies can be used to compile new curricula or modify those already existing so as to help pupils improve specific competencies, especially in those aspects that have been given least attention in the current educational system. It is also hoped that the competencies can be used to highlight the weaknesses of both teachers and pupils and guide the planning of future remedial work. Furthermore, the competencies should form the basis of the assessment when the appropriate instruments have been developed. Without viable assessment instruments, the competencies will not be accorded the required priority in school curricula.

3. Recommendations

In the discussion of the conclusions drawn from this study, it could be said that linguistic competencies is an interesting subject of research. Clearly, further detailed studies from both the theoretical and empirical aspects need to be conducted to obtain a more in-depth insight into the findings of this study and improve the teaching of Arabic in Oman. Examples of these recommendations are as follows:

1. Evaluating the extent to which teachers of Arabic at the intermediate stage are capable of teaching linguistic competencies. In other words, are teachers of Arabic sufficiently competent linguistically speaking?
2. Determining whether competency-based teacher training programmes can produce graduates better qualified to teach linguistic competencies.

3. Examining the attitudes of both teachers and pupils towards the study of listening, dictation, and Arabic calligraphy, and the identification of strategies to improve their attitudes.
4. Examining the role and responsibility of Arabic inspectors for monitoring and improving the standard of teachers' linguistic competencies.
5. Investigating the obstacles that prevent both teachers and pupils from mastering the linguistic competencies found in this study.
6. Examining the role of class and non-class activities in helping pupils to improve their language, and evaluating the extent to which the educational authority should provide facilities to encourage pupils to take part in such activities.
7. Evaluating the extent to which the language-teaching technology, such as tape-recorders and video recorders, the language laboratory and the Internet, participate in improving the teaching/learning of linguistic competencies.
8. Applying the observation card designed in this study to evaluate the standard of Arabic teachers' linguistic competencies.
9. The identification of the linguistic competencies required for teaching aspects of Arabic in secondary schools to complement the current study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Names and occupations of the arbitrators

Name	Occupation	Specialisation
‘Alī Aḥmad Madkūr.	Full professor and Dean of the College of Education	Arabic Language Teaching Methods
Aḥmad ‘Īsa.	Assistant professor	Arabic Language Teaching Methods
Faṭḥī Abu-Shi‘āsha‘.	Lecturer	Arabic Language Teaching Methods
Usāma ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.	Lecturer	Arabic Language Teaching Methods
Sha‘bān ‘Abd al-Qādir Qhazāla.	Assistant professor	Arabic Language Teaching Methods

Appendix 2

The Final Versions of the Questionnaire (The Pilot Study)

Experts in curriculum and the methodology of teaching Arabic language.

Arabic language inspectors.

It has been agreed that the Arabic language teacher must be capable and skilled to teach this subject properly. This means that he has to have the linguistic competencies essential for teaching this subject. Some of these competencies are:

1. Reading the text aloud in front of the pupils.
2. Developing pupils' critical reading competence.
3. Training pupils to use dictionaries.
4. Giving pupils the chance to practise grammar (written and spoken).
5. Training pupils to set and arrange their ideas during writing.
6. Training pupils to use simple Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).
7. Training pupils to respect and observe the conversation etiquette.
8. Training pupils to apply the rules of dictation correctly.
9. Training pupils to use punctuation marks.
10. Giving pupils examples of good writing to imitate.

As these competencies are important for the Arabic language teacher, the researcher is now conducting a field study entitled (The Linguistic Competencies Required for Preparatory School Teachers of Arabic in the Sultanate of Oman).

In order to do this, he kindly requests you to answer the following questions according to your point of view and wide experience in this field.

1. To what extent do you feel that Arabic language teachers could master the required linguistic competencies when teaching the following aspects of Arabic language: (please put (√) in front of your selection).

Linguistic aspect	Very Good	Good	Weak
Reading			
Literary Texts			
Grammar			
Written Composition			
Oral Composition			
Dictation and Punctuation			
Arabic Calligraphy			

2. Is there, currently, a special card available for evaluation of the linguistic competencies of the Arabic language teacher which is different from those used by the inspectors of other school subjects?
3. In case of the non-availability of such a card:
- a. Why do you think it is not available?
- b. Do you believe that it is important to develop such a card and, if so, why?

Thank you,
Sulaiman Al-Ghattami

Appendix 3.

Licences from the Ministry of Higher Education and the
Ministry of Education to carry out the pilot study



الرقم : ج.ج.ع. / ٢٨٧ / ٩٩
التاريخ : هـ
الموافق : ٢٨ / ٩ / ١٤٢٩ م

شهادة لمن يهمله الامر

تشهد دائرة الدراسات العليا بوزارة التعليم العالي أن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي مبعوث لمواصلة دراسته العليا لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة ادنبرة بالمملكة المتحدة على نفقة جامعة السلطان قابوس في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية ويقوم حالياً بدراسة استطلاعية تمهيداً لدراسة ميدانية بعنوان (الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية للمرحلة الاعدادية في السلطنة) .

نرجو التكرم العمل على مساعدة المذكور في تعبئة الاستبيان أو أي معلومات أخرى تتعلق بدراسته .

شاكرين ومقدرين كل جهد ومساعدة تقدم للمذكور لتسهيل مهمته .

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ،،،

عبدالله بن محمد الصبحي
٤١٦
٩٩
مدير الدراسات العليا

١٠٧ - ١ ص ٢

٢١٩٦٩ / ٤ / ٧

المحترم

الفاضل / مدير دائرة الاشراف التربوي
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم للمنطقة الداخلية
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم لمنطقة الباطنة شمال
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم لمحافظة مسقط

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ... وبعد

اود الافادة بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف الغتامي مبعوث لمواصلة دراسته العليا لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة ادنبرة بالمملكة المتحدة على نفقة جامعة السلطان قابوس في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية ويقوم حاليا بدارسة استطلاعية تمهيداً للدراسة ميدانية بعنوان (الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية للمرحلة الاعدادية في السلطنة) .

لذا يرجى التكرم الايعاز بتسهيل مهمة في تعبئة الاستبيان وجمع المعلومات الخاصة بالدراسة .

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم .

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ،،،

محمد بن شهاب بن حبيب اللواتي

مدير دائرة البحوث والاحصاء

الأصل بتوقيع

مدير دائرة البحوث والاحصاء

نسخة الى :

- مدير عام التخطيط والمعلومات التربوية

- ملف

Appendix 4.

General Evaluation Card Used Currently by Inspectors

Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Education

Directorate General of Education – Muscat

Educational Supervision Department

Class Visit Guidance Card

Directorate/Administration:

School: Inspector: Date of visit: Subject:

Teacher:

Qualification/Date:

Date of appointment:

Commencement of post:

Class	No. of pupils	Period	Subject

No.	Subject	Excellent	Good	Average	Assistance required	Extra assistance required
	First: Evaluating the planning stage for teaching/learning process:					
1	Executing annual plan					
2	Accuracy formulation of behavioural objectives.					
3	Selecting suitable activities and methods to achieve aims.					
4	Selecting evaluation methods that are consistent with the aims.					
	Second: Evaluating the execution stage for teaching/learning process:					
5	Activating previous experience and stored knowledge					
6	Using educational methods and scientific, written and oral activities.					
7	Stimulating and motivating learning					
8	Using suitable educational aids.					
9	Responding to pupils' mixed abilities.					
10	Linking the subject with the pupil's lives and local environment.					

11	Encouraging self-learning.					
12	Using continual assessment and benefiting from its results.					
13	Keeping discipline in the class.					
14	Knowledge of the subject.					
15	Correct use of Arabic.					
16	Paying attention to homework and other activities related to the school curriculum.					
17	Suitability of the teaching/learning material to the time allocated for each class period					
18	Keeping a monthly register of pupils' performance.					

Third: Inspector's meeting with the teacher after class visit:

Positive aspects of teaching:

.....

Proposed plan to develop teacher's performance:

.....

Other notes:

.....

Teacher's signature:.....

Head Teacher's signature:

Inspector's signature:.....



مديرية / إدارة :

اسم المدرسة : اسم الموجه : تاريخ الزيارة : المادة :

الفصل	عدد الطلاب	الحصة	موضوع الدرس

إسم المعلم :
المؤهل وتاريخه :
تاريخ التعيين :
تاريخ استلام العمل بالمدرسة :

م	الموضوع	ممتاز	جيد	وسط	يحتاج إلى رعاية	ملاحظات
---	---------	-------	-----	-----	-----------------	---------

أولاً : تقييم مرحلة التخطيط للموقف التعليمي :

١	مراعاة تنفيذ الخطة السنوية .					
٢	دقة صياغة الأهداف السلوكية .					
٣	اختيار الأنشطة والأساليب المناسبة لتحقيق الأهداف .					
٤	اختيار أساليب التقويم وربطها بالأهداف .					

ثانياً : تقييم مرحلة تنفيذ الموقف التعليمي :

٥	استثمار التعلم القبلي (الخبرات السابقة) .					
٦	توظيف الأساليب والأنشطة التعليمية (العلمية ، والتحريرية ، والشفوية) وفعاليتها					
٧	استشارة دافعية الطلاب وتفاعلهم .					
٨	استخدام الوسائل التعليمية المناسبة وتوظيفها .					
٩	مراعاة الفروق الفردية بين الطلاب .					
١٠	ربط المادة الدراسية بحياة الطالب والبيئة المحلية .					
١١	توجيه الطلاب للتعلم الذاتي .					
١٢	إستخدام التقويم المستمر وتوظيف نتائجه .					
١٣	إدارة الصف وانضباط الطلاب .					
١٤	التمكن من المادة العلمية .					
١٥	الحرص على استخدام اللغة العربية السليمة .					
١٦	الاهتمام بالنشاط البيئي والأنشطة المرتبطة بالقرارات الدراسية .					
١٧	ملاءمة فعاليات الدرس لزمان الحصة .					
١٨	الاهتمام بسجلات المستويات الشهرية وتوظيفها .					

ثالثاً : مرحلة اجتماع الموجه مع المعلم بعد الزيارة الصفية :

١ - الفواحي الإيجابية في المعلم : _____

ب - الخطة المقترحة لتحسين أداء المعلم : _____

ج - ملاحظات أخرى : _____

توقيع الموجه :

توقيع مدير المدرسة :

توقيع المعلم :

Appendix 5.

Letter from my supervisor to the Cultural Attache in the
Omani Embassy in London



DEPARTMENT of ISLAMIC
and MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The University of Edinburgh
7-8 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9LW

Fax 0131 650 6804

Telex 727442 (UNIVED) G

Email Islamic.Studies@ed.ac.uk

Telephone 0131 650 1000

or direct dial 0131 650 4182

7 August 2000

MYS/LS/19/45

To whom it may concern

Mr Sulaiman Al-Ghattami

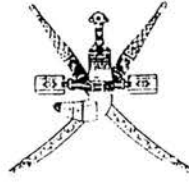
Mr Sulaiman Al-Ghattami intends to visit Oman to carry out research during the academic year 2000/2001. His fieldwork will consist of distributing questionnaires to Arabic language experts and Arabic language teachers in the various education directorates in Oman. The fieldwork is aimed at developing a framework for assessing language competence at the preparatory stage.

I hope you will be able to give him all the support and assistance he needs.

Professor M Y Suleiman
Postgraduate Supervisor

Appendix 6.

Licence from the Ministry of Higher Education to carry out
the fieldwork



الرقم: د.ع. / ١١٣٨
التاريخ: ٩/٥/١٤٠٥ هـ

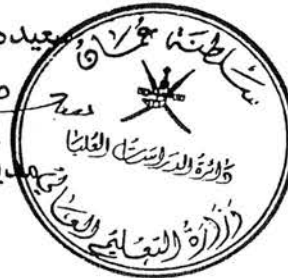
شهادة لمن يهمله الأمر

تشهد دائرة الدراسات العليا بوزارة التعليم العالي بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي مبعث من قبل جامعة السلطان قابوس لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية بـ University of Edinburgh ويقوم حالياً بإعداد البحث ، وهو متواجد حالياً بالسلطنة لجمع المعلومات اللازمة لبحثه .

نرجو التكرم مساعدة المذكور في الحصول على المعلومات والبيانات المطلوبة قدر الإمكان .

شاكرين ومقدرين كل جهد ومساعدة تقدم للمذكور لتسهيل مهمته .

سعيده بنت عبدالله الصبحي
٩١٥
١٠٠٠
مدير الدراسات العليا



Appendix 7.

**Letter from the Office of Research and Development to
Director General of Curriculum and Training**



سَلْطَنَةُ عُمَان
وَزَارَةُ التَّحْقِيقِ وَالْعُلُومِ
المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير

الفاضل / د . مدير عام المناهج والتدريب المحترم

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

أود إفادتكم بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي مبتعث من قبل جامعة السلطان قابوس لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية في جامعة ادنبره بالمملكة المتحدة ويقوم حالياً بجمع المعلومات اللازمة لبحثه من الموجه العام والخبراء ومستشارين تطوير مادة اللغة العربية في مديريتكم .

يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة المذكور والذي سيقوم بزيارة المديرية لجمع المعلومات .

شاكرة لكم حسن تعاونكم .

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ،،،

د . سناء بنت سبيل البلوشي

مدير المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير



Appendix 8.

**Letter from the Office of Research and Development to
Director General of Education in the Governate of Muscat
and the Interior Region**



رَاسِلَةُ عُمَان
وَزَارَةُ التَّحْقِيقِ وَالْعُلُومِ
المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير

الرقم : ص.م.ف. ٥٧٠٠٠٠٠٠
التاريخ : ١٤٤١ هـ الموافق : ١٠/١٠/١٤٤١

المحترم

الفاضل / مدير عام المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم لمنطقة

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

أود إفادتكم بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي مبتعث من قبل جامعة السلطان قابوس لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية في جامعة ادنبره بالمملكة المتحدة ويقوم حالياً بجمع المعلومات اللازمة لبحثه وهو موجه لجميع الموجهين و ١٠٪ من معلمين مادة اللغة العربية في مديريتكم .

يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة المذكور في جمع المعلومات المطلوبة .

شاكرة لكم حسن تعاونكم .

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ،،،

د . سناء بنت سبيل البلوشي

مدير المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير



Appendix 9.

**Letter from the Directorate of Education Supervision at
the Interior Region to the head teachers of the
preparatory schools**



سَيِّدَةُ هَمْدَان
وَزَارَةُ التَّرْبِيَّةِ وَالتَّعْلِيمِ
الْمَدِينَةُ الْعَالِيَّةُ لِلتَّرْبِيَّةِ وَالتَّعْلِيمِ
لِلْمَنْطِقَةِ الدَّرْعِيَّةِ

مكتب متابعة وتقييم الأداء المدرسي

الرقم : م : ع : ت : ٥ / ١ / ٢٢٩
التاريخ : ٢٨ / ٨ / ١٤٢٧ هـ
المرافق : ٢٥ / ١١ / ٢٠٠٥ م

الملازمين

الأفاضل / مدير في ومديرات مدارس المنطقة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ... وبعد ...

نفيدكم علماً بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي المبتعث من جامعة السلطان قابوس لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية بالمملكة المتحدة ، ويقوم حالياً بجمع المعلومات اللازمة لبحثه .

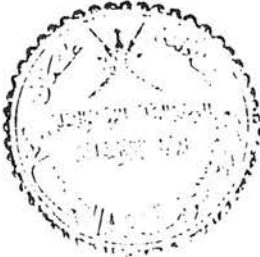
يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمته في جمع المعلومات المطلوبة .

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم ...

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ...

د. ناصر بن عبد الله بن سالم العبري

ناصر بن عبد الله بن سالم العبري
نائب مدير مكتب متابعة وتقييم الأداء المدرسي



نسخة إلى

- مكتب متابعة وتقييم الأداء المدرسي
- الملف

Appendix 10.

**Letter from the Directorate of Education Supervision at
the Governate of Muscat to the head teachers of the
preparatory schools**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

٢٥٠٠ / ٦ ٩
٢١ ٩ ١٣
٢٠٠ ١٢ ٩



الجمهورية العربية السورية
الوزارة العامة للتربية والتعليم
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم بمسقط

دائرة الإشراف التربوي

الأفاضل / مديرو ومديرات المدارس الإعدادية المحترمون

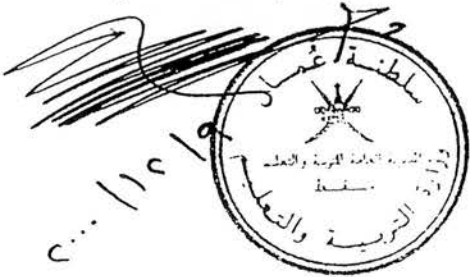
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد

نود الإفادة بأن الفاضل / سليمان بن سيف بن سالمين الغتامي
مبتعث من قبل جامعة السلطان قابوس لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول
على درجة الدكتوراه في مجال مناهج وأدق تدريس اللغة العربية في
جامعة أدنبره بالمملكة المتحدة ويقوم حالياً بجمع المعلومات اللازمة
لبحثه .

يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة المذكور بتوزيع الاستبيانات الخاصة
بالبحث على معلمي / معلمات اللغة العربية حتى يتمكن من جمع البيانات
المطلوبة .

وتقبلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام

خميس بن سالم بن خميس الراسبي
مدير دائرة الإشراف التربوي



Appendix 11.

Names and occupations of the specialists who judged the validity of the questionnaire

Name	Occupation	Specialisation	Place of employment
‘Alī Aḥmad Madkūr	Full professor and Dean of the College of Education	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣaghīr Muhammad ‘Īsā	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Aḥmad Muḥammad ‘Īsā	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Usāma ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ‘Abd al-‘Azīz	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Sha‘bān ‘Abd al-Qādir Ghazāla	Professor	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Aḥmad al-Ḥanashī	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in al-Rustāq
Kāmil Maḥmūd Najm	Professor	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in al-Rustāq
Hanā Abu Ḍayf	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in Ṣūr
Nāṣir Fu’ād ‘Alī Ghubish	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in Ṣūr
‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ‘Imāra	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in Nazwa
Muḥammad ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Shu‘ayb	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education for Teachers Training in Nazwa
‘Alī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm	Lecturer	Educational Statistics	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University

Appendix 12.

The letter addressed to the judges and the evaluation sheet attached to it for examining the validity of the questionnaire

استبانة تحديد الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية بسلطنة عمان

الفاضل المحكّم/.....المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،،،

فيسرني أن أضع بين أيديكم الاستبانة المرفقة التي هي جزء من دراسة تهدف إلى تحديد أهم الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية بالسلطنة.

ونظراً لدوركم الفعّال في العملية التربوية، يأمل الباحث الاستفادة من خبرتكم الثريّة وأرائكم القيّمة في تحكيم^١ الصورة المبدئية للاستبانة المرفقة؛ حتى تكون في صورتها النهائية القابلة للتطبيق على عينة الدراسة المتمثلة في خبراء المناهج وطرائق تدريس اللغة العربية، بالإضافة إلى توجيهي اللغة العربية ومعلميها. فالمرجو منكم التكرم بإبداء الرأي في:

١. الصياغة اللغوية لمفردات القائمة.
٢. ترتيب الكفايات اللغوية وتدرجها داخل كل فرع لغوي.
٣. شمول القائمة للكفايات اللغوية.
٤. مدى ملائمة المقياس الخماسي المدرج المستخدم لاستخلاص آراء أفراد العينة.
٥. مدى صدق القائمة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله.
٦. وضوح التعليمات (الرسالة) الموجهة إلى عينة الدراسة.

^{١٠} أرجو ملاحظة أن المطلوب منكم تحكيم فقرات القائمة من خلال إبداء الرأي حول المذكور أعلاه، وليس تعبئتها.

كما أرجو التكرم بإجراء أي تعديل مناسب ترونه في محتوى هذه الكفايات، وإضافة كفايات لغوية أخرى ترونها ضرورية.

وأخيراً أرجو التكرم بوضع خلاصة آرائكم في الجدول الوارد بعد القائمة.

ملاحظة: الرجاء التكرم بتعبئة البيانات الأساسية التالية للحاجة إليها:

الاسم:
المؤهل العلمي:
الوظيفة الحالية:
جهة العمل:

عزيزي المحكم:

الآن، وبعد قراءتك الفاحصة وإبداء آرائك القيمة، أرجو التكرم مشكوراً بتعبئة الاستبانة التالية ملخصاً فيها الصورة العامة لما قمت بإبداء رأيك فيه:

م	الفقرة	أوافق بدرجة			لا أوافق
		كبيرة	متوسطة	قليلة	
١	صحة الصياغة اللغوية لمفردات القائمة				
٢	تدرج الكفايات اللغوية بشكل جيد داخل كل فرع لغوي				
٣	شمول القائمة للكفايات اللغوية				
٤	ملاءمة المقياس الخماسي المدرج المُستخدم لاستخلاص آراء أفراد العينة				
٥	صدق القائمة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله				
٦	وضوح التعليمات (الرسالة) الموجهة إلى عينة الدراسة				

وشكراً على تعاونكم،

الباحث/ سليمان بن سيف الغنّامي

Appendix 13.

The final version of the questionnaire and the covering letter

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
استبانة تحديد الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية
بالمرحلة الإعدادية في سلطنة عمان

الأفاضل/ خبراء مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها،
موجهي اللغة العربية وموجهاتها،
معلمي اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية ومعلماتها المحترمين.

المنطقة التعليمية التابع لها:.....

المدرسة (للمعلمين والمعلمات):.....

سنوات العمل في هذه المهنة: أقل من سنة () أكثر من سنة ()

(الرجاء التكرم بكتابة البيانات المطلوبة أعلاه)

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد...

فيسرني أن أضع بين أيديكم الاستبانة المرفقة، التي هي جزء من دراسة علمية؛ لنيل درجة الدكتوراة في مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد أهم الكفايات اللغوية* اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية بالسلطنة في الفروع اللغوية المختلفة التي تمثل في مجملها الفنون

* المقصود بالكفايات اللغوية في هذه الدراسة: مجموعة من المعلومات والمهارات والاتجاهات التي ينبغي أن يمتلكها معلم اللغة العربية؛ لجعله قادراً ومؤهلاً لمساعدة طلابه على تحقيق الأهداف اللغوية المراد الوصول إليها، وذلك من خلال ممارسة المفردات الواردة في هذه الاستبانة والتمكّن منها.

الأربعة للغة (الاستماع، والتحدث، والقراءة، والكتابة). وقد تضمنت هذه الاستبانة الكفايات اللغوية التي تمّ استقاؤها من تحليل كتب مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها ، وأدلة المعلم، والدراسات السابقة المرتبطة.

ونظراً لدوركم الفعّال في العملية التربوية، وسعيكم الدؤوب في خدمة اللغة العربية، والرقي بطرق تدريسها، يأمل الباحث الاستفادة من خبرتكم الثرية وآرائكم القيّمة في الإجابة عن فقرات هذه الاستبانة، وذلك بوضع علامة (✓) تحت الاستجابة التي تعبر عن رأيكم بكل دقة وموضوعية عن درجة أهمية كل كفاية لغوية بالنسبة إلى معلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية في السلطنة؛ وذلك للاسترشاد بهذه الآراء في التوصل إلى أهم الكفايات التي يجب أن يمتلكها معلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الإعدادية؛ توطئة لبناء بطاقة ملاحظة لتقويم أدائه في هذه الكفايات.

أعزائي الأفاضل: ثَقُوا تماماً بأنّ المعلومات والآراء التي تدلون بها لن تُستخدم إلا لغرض البحث العلمي.

ولكم - سلفاً - جزيل الشكر والتقدير على صدق تعاونكم،

الباحث/ سليمان بن سيف الغتّامي

قائمة الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة لمعلم اللغة العربية

بالمرحلة الإعدادية في سلطنة عمان

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١	أولاً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس الاستماع، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: التمييز بين الأصوات المتقاربة في النطق.					
٢	تذكر الأفكار المسموعة.					
٣	ترتيب ما يُستمع إليه من أفكار وأحداث.					
٤	الانتباه والتركيز أثناء الاستماع.					
٥	متابعة المتحدث أو القارئ حتى النهاية.					
٦	عدم مقاطعة المتحدث أو القارئ.					
٧	توظيف السياق في فهم الكلمات الصعبة الواردة في موضوع الاستماع.					
٨	فهم الجمل الطويلة عند الاستماع.					
٩	تتبع الأفكار: الرئيسة والفرعية للموضوع.					
١٠	فهم المعاني الضمنية التي يوحي بها المتحدث أو القارئ.					
١١	ملاحظة مدى تسلسل الأفكار.					
١٢	فهم العلاقة التي تربط بين الأفكار.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١٣	تحديد مدى شمولية الأفكار أو نقصها.					
١٤	التمييز بين الأفكار من حيث صلتها بالموضوع.					
١٥	التمييز بين الأفكار الخاطئة والأفكار الصحيحة.					
١٦	استخلاص الفكرة الرئيسة لموضوع الاستماع.					
١٧	التمييز بين المفاهيم والمعلومات والحقائق.					
١٨	تمييز الاستعمالات اللغوية الصحيحة من الخاطئة.					
١٩	كشف المتناقضات في المادة المسموعة.					
٢٠	التنبؤ بما سيقال.					
٢١	استخلاص المعلومات المهمة من المسموع.					
٢٢	تقويم مدى نجاح المتحدث أو القارئ في توصيل الرسالة.					
٢٣	تقويم محتوى المادة المسموعة من حيث إبراز جوانب القوة، وجوانب الضعف فيها.					
٢٤	تدوين الملاحظات المهمة المتعلقة بعناصر الموضوع وأفكاره.					
٢٥	تلخيص ما تم الاستماع إليه بأسلوب شفوي جيد.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٢٦	تلخيص ما تمّ الاستماع إليه بأسلوب كتابي جيد					
٢٧	الاستفادة مما تمّ الاستماع إليه في تنمية الثروة اللغوية والفكرية والثقافية لديهم.					
٢٨	تقدير أهمية الاستماع باعتباره فناً من فنون اللغة.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					
١	ثانياً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس القراءة، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: التمييز بين أشكال الحروف، خاصة المتشابه منها في الرسم.					
٢	التمييز بين أصوات الحروف، خاصة المتقارب منها في المخرج.					
٣	اختيار الموضوعات القرائية الملائمة لمستواهم، والمفيدة لهم.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٤	التمكن من كفايات القراءة الصامتة، المتمثلة في: أ - عدم إظهار النطق أثناء القراءة.					
	ب - السرعة في القراءة.					
	ج - الفهم الدقيق للمقروء.					
	د - أخذ الملحوظات المهمة أثناء القراءة.					
٥	التمكن من كفايات القراءة الجهرية، المتمثلة في: أ - إخراج الحروف من مخارجها الصحيحة، والنطق بها نطقاً سليماً.					
	ب - تمثيل المعنى أثناء القراءة من خلال تنويع نغمة الصوت، واستخدام الإيماءات المناسبة.					
	ج - الطلاقة والجرأة أثناء القراءة الجهرية.					
	د - توظيف علامات الترقيم أثناء القراءة.					
	هـ - القراءة الصحيحة الخالية من الأخطاء اللغوية.					
٦	تعرف شخصية الكاتب وحياته.					
٧	استخراج الفكرة الرئيسة للموضوع.					
٨	فهم الفكرة الرئيسة للموضوع.					
٩	فهم معاني المفردات الصعبة من خلال السياق.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١٠	توظيف المفردات اللغوية الجديدة في بناء جمل مفيدة.					
١١	استخدام المعاجم اللغوية المشهورة.					
١٢	تقسيم موضوع القراءة إلى وحدات فكرية.					
١٣	استخراج الفكرة الرئيسة لكل فقرة.					
١٤	تحليل الأفكار الجزئية لكل فقرة.					
١٥	التمييز بين الأفكار الرئيسة والثانوية.					
١٦	التمييز بين الأفكار المرتبطة وغير المرتبطة بالموضوع.					
١٧	تمييز الأفكار الصحيحة من الخاطئة.					
١٨	ملاحظة مدى ترابط الأفكار وتسلسلها.					
١٩	التمييز بين الحقيقة والرأي.					
٢٠	التمييز بين المسلمات والفروض.					
٢١	اختيار عناوين مناسبة لما يقرأ.					
٢٢	استخلاص المعلومات المفيدة من المقروء.					
٢٣	استخلاص القيم والمبادئ من المقروء.					
٢٤	الحكم على صحة المعلومات الموجودة في النص المقروء.					
٢٥	التعبير شفويًا عن المقروء بألفاظ وتراكيب فصيحة.					
٢٦	تلخيص المقروء كتابيًا، وتقديم مضمونه بشكل موجز ولغة سليمة.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٢٧	توظيف ما تمّ استخلاصه من المقروء في مواقف الحياة الطبيعية.					
٢٨	استخدام المراجع وفهارسها؛ للبحث عن الموضوعات المهمة والمناسبة للقراءة.					
٢٩	توظيف موضوعات القراءة في تنمية كفايات الاستماع.					
٣٠	توظيف موضوعات القراءة في تنمية كفايات التعبير الشفهي والكتابي.					
٣١	توظيف درس القراءة في فهم بعض القواعد اللغوية.					
٣٢	إتاحة المعلم الفرصة للطلاب جميعاً للمشاركة في القراءة الجهرية.					
٣٣	تصحيح المعلم للأخطاء اللغوية التي يقع فيها الطلاب.					
٣٤	تشخيص المعلم الضعف القرائي لدى الطلاب بوسائل مختلفة.					
٣٥	إعداد المعلم أنشطة لغوية لعلاج الضعف القرائي لدى الطلاب.					
٣٦	تعرف المعلم الميول القرائية لدى الطلاب.					
٣٧	تنمية المعلم اتجاهات إيجابية نحو القراءة الحرة لدى الطلاب.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٣٨	إعداد المعلم أنشطة قرائية متنوعة لإشباع الميول القرائية لدى الطلاب					
٣٩	تنمية المعلم الميل لدى الطلاب إلى القراءة لأغراض مختلفة.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة :					
١	ثالثاً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس النصوص الأدبية، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: اختيار النصوص الأدبية الجيدة شعراً ونثراً الممثلة لمختلف عصور الأدب وأغراضه.					
٢	تعرف شخصية صاحب النص.					
٣	تعرف المناسبة التي قيل فيها النص.					
٤	تعرف أثر البيئة والعصر الذي عاشه الأديب في إنتاج النص.					
٥	تعرف الغرض العام للنص.					
٦	تعرف الشكل الفني للنص الشعري (موزون - حرّ)					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٧	تعرف الشكل الفني للنص النثري (قصة - خطبة- مقالة ... إلخ)					
٨	التعرف من خلال النص على المدرسة الأدبية التي ينتمي إليها الأديب.					
٩	إجادة فن الإلقاء الشعري عن طريق: أ - تغيير درجة الصوت وتناغمه حسبما يقتضي مضمون النص.					
	ب - الالتزام بالقواعد النحوية والصرفية أثناء الإلقاء الشعري.					
	ج - استخدام الإيماء المناسبة أثناء الإلقاء الشعري؛ لتوضيح المعنى المراد.					
١٠	فهم معاني المفردات الصعبة من خلال السياق.					
١١	توظيف المفردات الجديدة في بناء جمل مفيدة.					
١٢	اكتساب ثروة لغوية في المفردات والتراكيب والأساليب الفصيحة.					
١٣	تقسيم النص الأدبي إلى وحداته الفكرية.					
١٤	استخراج الفكرة الرئيسة لكل وحدة فكرية.					
١٥	فهم المعنى التفصيلي لكل وحدة فكرية.					
١٦	فهم الوحدة العضوية للنص الأدبي.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١٧	ملاحظة مدى ارتباط الأفكار ببعضها وتسلسلها في النص.					
١٨	تعرف البحر العروضي للنص الشعري.					
١٩	تعرف نوع الموسيقى في النص الشعري.					
٢٠	تعرف ما قد يوجد من عيوب في قافية الشعر.					
٢١	تعرف العاطفة المسيطرة على النص.					
٢٢	استنتاج خصائص أسلوب الأديب كما تبدو من النص.					
٢٣	استنتاج مظاهر التجديد في شكل النص وغرضه.					
٢٤	التذوق الفني للنص من خلال: أ - الإحساس بجمال النغم والإيقاع.					
	ب - استخراج الصور البلاغية من النص.					
	ج - بيان أثر الصور البلاغية في المعنى.					
	د - استخراج القيم النبيلة التي يشتمل عليها النص.					
	هـ - التفاعل مع أحاسيس الأديب والاستجابة لها.					
٢٥	نقد النص الأدبي نقدًا موضوعيًا من خلال: أ - الحكم على مدى نجاح الأديب في التعبير عن فكرة ما.					

الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
ب - الموازنة بين أسلوب الأديب نفسه في أكثر من نص.					
ج - الحكم على جودة النص الأدبي من خلال المفاضلة بينه وبين نصوص أخرى لأدباء آخرين.					
٢٦ الاطلاع على المصادر الأدبية المتصلة بموضوع النص الأدبي وصاحبه.					
٢٧ كتابة نبذة مختصرة عن شخصية صاحب النص، من خلال الرجوع الى المصادر المرتبطة.					
٢٨ تعرف أعلام الأدب العربي في عصوره المختلفة.					
٢٩ تعرف أبرز اتجاهات الأدب العربي المعاصر.					
٣٠ تعرف أبرز اتجاهات النقد الأدبي المعاصر.					
٣١ الإلمام بتاريخ الأدب العربي، وسماته البارزة.					
٣٢ تمثيل الأعمال الأدبية التي تسمح طبيعتها بذلك.					
٣٣ الربط بين النصوص الأدبية والفروع اللغوية الأخرى.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٣٤	الرغبة في دراسة الأدب العربي، والإقبال على قراءته وحفظ الكثير من نصوصه.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					
١	رابعاً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس التعبير الشفوي، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: اختيار الموضوع الذي يريدون التحدث فيه من خلال: أ - استغلال الفروع اللغوية الأخرى.					
	ب - استغلال المواد الدراسية الأخرى.					
	ج - مراعاة ارتباط الموضوعات بمواقف معينة تتصل بحياتهم.					
٢	تحديد أفكار الموضوع وعناصره المهمة.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٣	استخدام اللغة الفصحى الميسرة أثناء التحدث، من خلال: أ - إخراج الحروف من مخارجها الصحيحة.					
	ب - نطق الكلمات الصعبة نطقاً سليماً.					
	ج - استخدام الكلمات والجمل المناسبة للمعاني المرادة.					
٤	تنظيم أفكار الموضوع وعناصره، وترتيبها أثناء التحدث.					
٥	جذب انتباه المستمع، وإثارته أثناء التحدث، من خلال: أ - الوقف والانتقال السليم وفقاً للمعنى المراد.					
	ب - مراعاة متطلبات الموقف من حيث الإيجاز والإطناب.					
	ج - استخدام الحركة والصوت الموحين بالمعنى المراد (الملاءمة بين الإشارة والعبارة).					
	د - مراعاة عدم خروج الموضوع عن هدفه الرئيس.					
٦	التعبير عن الأفكار بوضوح وطلاقة.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	قليلة الأهمية
٧	تغطية الموضوع من جوانبه المختلفة أثناء التحدث.					
٨	تحري الدقة والأمانة عند عرض الأفكار والآراء.					
٩	نقد أفكار الآخرين بطريقة موضوعية.					
١٠	الثقة بالنفس والجرأة عند مواجهة الآخرين.					
١١	اتباع آداب الحوار أثناء التحدث، من خلال: أ - إقناع الآخرين بإقامة الدليل. ب - الرد باحترام على استفسارات الآخرين وانتقاداتهم. ج - احترام وجهات نظر الآخرين أثناء النقاش.					
١٢	تلخيص الأفكار الأساسية في نهاية التحدث.					
١٣	التمييز أثناء الحديث بين خصائص المجالات المختلفة للتعبير الشفوي كالمناقشة والخطابة.					
١٤	الاشتراك في إدارة الاجتماعات والندوات والمناقشات... إلخ.					
١٥	الاطلاع على المصادر والمراجع المتعددة لتنمية الثروة اللغوية التي تساعد على التعبير.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١٦	إعطاء المعلم الفرصة للطلاب جميعاً للتحدث.					
١٧	إثارة المعلم دوافع الطلاب للحديث في الموضوعات المختلفة.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					
١	خامساً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس التعبير الكتابي، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: اختيار موضوعات تمثل مجالات التعبير الكتابي (رسائل - مقالات - محاضر جلسات - موضوعات إبداعية... إلخ)					
٢	الرجوع إلى المصادر المختلفة لكتابة الموضوع.					
٣	توظيف الفروع اللغوية الأخرى في التعبير الكتابي.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٤	تخطيط الموضوع، وتقسيمه إلى مقدمة وعرض وخاتمة.					
٥	الربط بين الجمل بدقة.					
٦	استخدام قواعد الإملاء في الكتابة.					
٧	استخدام علامات الترقيم أثناء الكتابة.					
٨	اختيار الكلمات والجمل المناسبة للمعاني المرادة.					
٩	تنظيم الكتابة في سطور وجمل وفقرات.					
١٠	وضع العناوين الرئيسة والفرعية في أماكنها الصحيحة.					
١١	تنظيم الأفكار وتسلسلها أثناء الكتابة.					
١٢	تنويع الأفكار.					
١٣	وضوح الأفكار.					
١٤	استخدام الهوامش الضرورية أثناء الكتابة.					
١٥	عرض الرأي بأسلوب سهل وجذاب.					
١٦	عرض الدليل الذي يدعم فكرة أو رأياً يؤمن به.					
١٧	نقد أفكار الآخرين وآرائهم بطريقة موضوعية.					
١٨	حسن الاقتباس أو الاستشهاد، واستخدامه في موضعه المناسب.					
١٩	الدقة في الكتابة.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة جداً	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٢٠	السرعة في الكتابة.					
٢١	ممارسة التعبير الكتابي بنوعيه: الوظيفي والإبداعي.					
٢٢	اكتشاف نوعية الأخطاء اللغوية التي يقعون فيها.					
٢٣	تصحيح الأخطاء اللغوية التي يقعون فيها.					
٢٤	اتباع المعلم معايير موضوعية للحكم على جودة كل نوع من أنواع التعبير الكتابي أثناء تصحيحه.					
٢٥	تقويم المعلم الأفكار والأساليب التي يستخدمها الطلاب في كتابة موضوعاتهم.					
٢٦	إعداد المعلم أنشطة متنوعة لمعالجة الأخطاء اللغوية الشائعة لديهم.					
٢٧	استثارة المعلم دوافع الطلاب للكتابة في الموضوعات المختلفة.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
١	سادساً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس قواعد اللغة العربية (النحو والصرف)، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: اختيار النص الأدبي الذي يتضمن الأمثلة التي ترتبط بالقاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية المطلوب تعلمها.					
٢	فهم المعنى العام للنص.					
٣	استخراج الأمثلة التي تمثل القاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية من النص.					
٤	فهم العلاقة بين الأمثلة وبعضها من خلال الربط بين جزئياتها.					
٥	الموازنة بين الأمثلة من خلال معرفة أوجه الشبه وأوجه الاختلاف بينها.					
٦	استنباط القاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية من الأمثلة المتنوعة.					
٧	إعراب الجمل إعراباً صحيحاً.					
٨	ضبط أواخر الكلمات بالشكل ضبطاً صحيحاً قراءة وكتابة.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٩	إنشاء جمل مفيدة تطبيقاً للقاعدة التي تم استنباطها.					
١٠	معرفة القواعد الصرفية المتعلقة بضبط بنية الكلمة.					
١١	تطبيق قواعد اللغة في أحاديثهم وكتاباتهم من خلال استعمال الألفاظ والتراكيب استعمالاً صحيحاً.					
١٢	اكتشاف الأخطاء النحوية والصرفية التي تصدر منهم.					
١٣	تصحيح الأخطاء النحوية والصرفية التي تصدر منهم.					
١٤	توظيف القواعد النحوية والصرفية السابقة في فهم الدروس الجديدة لقواعد اللغة.					
١٥	الربط بين القواعد اللغوية، والفروع الأخرى للغة العربية.					
١٦	الاستفادة من المراجع المتنوعة لإجراء المزيد من التطبيقات النحوية والصرفية.					
١٧	ممارسة أنشطة لغوية متنوعة لعلاج الأخطاء الشائعة لديهم.					
١٨	تقديم المعلم المفاهيم النحوية والصرفية بأسلوب سهل ومناسب لمستوى الطلاب.					
١٩	إثارة المعلم دافعية الطلاب لتعلم النحو والصرف					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديدة الأهمية
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					
١	سابعاً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس الإملاء والترقيم، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها: التمييز بين أشكال الحروف، خاصة المتشابهة منها في الرسم.					
٢	الإنصات وحسن الاستماع لكيفية نطق الحروف والكلمات من مخارجها الصحيحة.					
٣	التمييز بين أصوات الحروف، خاصة المتقاربة منها في المخرج.					
٤	نطق الحروف والكلمات نطقاً صحيحاً.					
٥	معرفة القواعد الأساسية التي تكفل سلامة رسم الحروف والكلمات.					
٦	السيطرة على مشكلات الكتابة المتعلقة بطبيعة الكتابة العربية كالهزمة والألف اللينة والتاء المفتوحة والتاء المربوطة... إلخ.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٧	السيطرة على الصعوبات التي تخالف فيها الكتابة النطق، مثل الكلمات التي تضم حروفاً تنطق ولا تكتب، كالآلف في هذا.					
٨	كتابة جمل صحيحة إملائياً.					
٩	الدقة في الكتابة.					
١٠	السرعة في الكتابة.					
١١	تعرف أنواع علامات الترقيم.					
١٢	تعرف مواضع استخدام علامات الترقيم في الكتابة.					
١٣	التمكن من استعمال علامات الترقيم استعمالاً صحيحاً قراءة وكتابة.					
١٤	كتابة موضوع كامل دون خطأ إملائي.					
١٥	اكتشاف الأخطاء الإملائية التي يقعون فيها.					
١٦	تصحيح الأخطاء باتباع طريقة التصحيح الملائمة.					
١٧	ربط الإملاء بالفروع الأخرى للغة العربية.					
١٨	توظيف القواعد الإملائية في كتاباتهم اليومية.					
١٩	ممارسة أنشطة لغوية متنوعة لعلاج الأخطاء الشائعة لديهم.					
٢٠	إثارة المعلم دافعية الطلاب لتعلم القواعد الإملائية، وممارستها.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديمة الأهمية
٢١	متابعة المعلم القرارات الجمعية الخاصة بتيسير الإملاء.					
	كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					
	ثامناً: الكفايات اللغوية اللازمة للمعلم في تدريس الخط العربي، أن يكون المعلم قادراً على تنمية قدرة الطلاب على ممارسة الكفايات التالية والتمكن منها:					
١	التمييز بين أشكال الحروف، خاصة المتشابه منها في الرسم، مثل (د- ذ، ر - ز، س - ش، ص - ض... إلخ).					
٢	اتباع الطريقة الصحيحة لكتابة الحروف في أوضاعها المختلفة في الكلمة.					
٣	التزام السطر أثناء ممارسة الخط.					
٤	إتقان رسم الحروف متصلة ومنفصلة.					
٥	مراعاة الحروف التي يجب أن تنزلق أسفل السطر، مثل: ج - م - ع... إلخ.					
٦	إتقان رسم الكلمات.					
٧	الموازنة بين السرعة والإتقان في الخط.					

م	الكفايات اللغوية	مهمة جداً	مهمة	غير متأكد	قليلة الأهمية	عديدة الأهمية
٨	تعرف الأنواع المختلفة للخطوط العربية بعامة.					
٩	إتقان الكتابة بخطي النسخ والرقعة.					
١٠	فهم النموذج الكتابي الجيد الذي يقتدون به.					
١١	محاكاة النموذج الكتابي؛ بهدف إتقانه.					
١٢	وضوح الخط.					
١٣	التناسق والترتيب في الخط.					
١٤	الانتباه ودقة الملاحظة أثناء الكتابة.					
١٥	جمال الخط.					
١٦	تذوق جمال الخط العربي.					
١٧	اكتشاف الأخطاء أثناء ممارسة الخط.					
١٨	تصحيح الأخطاء.					
١٩	ممارسة أنشطة لغوية متنوعة لعلاج الأخطاء الشائعة لديهم.					
٢٠	ممارسة الخط في مختلف الفروع اللغوية، والمواد الدراسية.					
٢١	تنمية المعلم المواهب الفنية للطلاب أثناء ممارسة الخط.					
٢٢	تنمية المعلم ميول الطلاب نحو ممارسة الخط العربي.					
	* كفايات لغوية أخرى ترون إضافتها، مع تحديد درجة الموافقة:					

وأخيرًا، زملائي وزميلاتي في المهنة، وبعد قراءتكم الفاحصة، وإجابتكم عن فقرات هذه الاستبانة:

أرجو منكم التكرم بذكر أية اقتراحات أو ملاحظات تودون تزويد الباحث بها، سواء فيما يتعلق بالكفايات الواردة في الاستبانة، أو بتدريس اللغة العربية بشكل عام:.....

وفي الختام، أشكركم على تخصيص جزء من وقتكم الثمين للقيام بهذا الجهد المثمر إن شاء الله تعالى.

Appendix 14.

Names and occupations of the specialists who judged the validity of the observation card

Name	Occupation	Specialisation	Place of employment
‘Alī Aḥmad Madkūr	Full professor and Dean of the College of Education	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣaghīr Muhammad ‘Īsā	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Aḥmad Muḥammad ‘Īsā	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Usāma ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ‘Abd al-‘Azīz	Lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
Sha‘bān ‘Abd al-Qādir Ghazāla	Professor	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University
‘Aṭā Abu Jabī	Expert in Arabic Language	Arabic Language teaching methods	Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education
Majīd ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ‘Imrān Najī	Consultant in Arabic Language curriculum	Arabic Language teaching methods	Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education
Muḥammad Aḥmad al-‘Aqla	Expert in Arabic Language	Arabic Language teaching methods	Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education
Muḥammad Aḥmad Musā	Expert in Arabic Language	Arabic Language teaching methods	Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education
Muṣṭafā Ṭālib al-‘Ūdāt	General Inspector of Arabic Language	Arabic Language teaching methods	Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education

Appendix 15.

The letter addressed to the judges and the evaluation sheet attached to it for examining the validity of the observation card

بطاقة ملاحظة مقترحة لتقويم أداء معلمي اللغة العربية في الكفايات اللغوية في فرعي القراءة والقواعد اللغوية بالمرحلة الإعدادية في سلطنة عمان

الفاضل: أستاذ مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها

خبير مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،،،

فيسرني أن أضع بين أيديكم البطاقة المرفقة التي هي جزء من دراسة؛ لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها. وتهدف هذه البطاقة إلى تقويم أداء معلمي اللغة العربية في الكفايات اللغوية في فرعي القراءة والقواعد اللغوية بالمرحلة الإعدادية في سلطنة عمان.

وقد تمّ تحديد الكفايات المكوّنة لهذه البطاقة من النتائج التي توصل إليها الباحث بعد تحليله إحصائياً للاستبانة التي قام بتطبيقها على عينة بلغ مجموعها (٢٥٠) فرداً من معلمي اللغة العربية ومعلماتها، وموجهي اللغة العربية وموجهاتها، وخبرائها في السلطنة. وقد بلغت أهمية هذه الكفايات درجة (مهمة جداً). وشملت هذه البطاقة (١٠) كفايات لتدريس القراءة، و(١٤) كفاية لتدريس القواعد اللغوية (النحو والصرف)، ويقابل كل كفاية منها تقدير متدرج خماسي، يتضمّن المستويات التالية لامتلاك الكفاية: عالٍ جداً (٤) - عالٍ (٣) - متوسط (٢) - ضعيف (١) - منعدم (صفر).

ولكونكم من المتخصصين في مناهج اللغة العربية وطرق تدريسها، يأمل الباحث الاستفادة من خبرتكم الثرية وآرائكم القيّمة في تحكيم* الصورة المبدئية للبطاقة المرفقة؛ حتى تخرج في صورتها النهائية القابلة للاستخدام. فالمرجو منكم التكرم بإبداء الرأي فيما يلي:

١. اشتمال البطاقة لجميع البيانات الأساسية الخاصة بالملاحظ والملاحظ.

* أرجو ملاحظة أن المطلوب من حضرتكم تحكيم فقرات البطاقة من خلال إبداء الرأي حول المذكور أعلاه، وليس تعينتها.

٢. الصياغة اللغوية لمفردات البطاقة.
 ٣. الصياغة الإجرائية (السلوكية) للعبارات التي تصف كل كفاية.
 ٤. ترتيب الكفايات اللغوية، وتدرجها داخل كل فرع لغوي.
 ٥. إمكانية ملاحظة هذه الكفايات وتقويمها.
 ٦. وضوح التعليمات الموجهة إلى الملاحظ أثناء استخدامه البطاقة.
 ٧. مدى ملائمة المقياس الخماسي المدرج، والتقدير الكمي المُعطى لتحديد درجة الأداء.
 ٨. مدى صدق البطاقة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله.
- كما أرجو التكرم بإجراء أي تعديل ترونه في محتوى هذه البطاقة، وذكر أية ملاحظات ترونها.
- وأخيراً أرجو التكرم بوضع خلاصة آرائكم في بطاقة التحكيم الوارد في النهاية.

الرجاء التكرم بتعبئة البيانات الأساسية التالية:

الاسم:

المؤهل العلمي:

الوظيفة الحالية:

جهة العمل:

عزيزي المحكم: الآن، وبعد قراءتك الفاحصة، وإبداء آرائك القيمة في البطاقة السابق ذكرها، أرجو التكرم مشكوراً بتعبئة البطاقة التالية ملخصاً فيها الصورة العامة لما قمت بإبداء رأيك فيه:

م	الفقرة	أوافق بدرجة			لا أوافق
		كبيرة	متوسطة	قليلة	
١	اشتمال البطاقة لجميع البيانات الأساسية الخاصة بالملاحظ والملاحظ.				
٢	صحة الصياغة اللغوية لمفردات البطاقة				
٣	صحة الصياغة الإجرائية (السلوكية) للعبارات التي تصف الكفايات				
٤	تدرج الكفايات اللغوية بشكل جيد داخل كل فرع لغوي حسب مراحل تنفيذ الدرس				
٥	إمكانية ملاحظة الكفايات الواردة في البطاقة، وإمكانية تقويمها				
٦	وضوح التعليمات الموجهة إلى الملاحظ				
٧	ملاءمة المقياس الخماسي المدرج، والتقدير الكمي المستخدم في البطاقة				
٨	صدق القائمة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله				

وختاماً، أرجو التكرم بإجراء أي تعديل ترونه في محتوى البطاقة المقترحة، وذكر أية ملاحظات ترونها؛ لتحسينها وتطويرها:

.....

ولكم جزيل الشكر على صدق تعاونكم،
الباحث/ سليمان بن سيف الغتامي

Appendix 16.

The final version of the observation card and the covering sheets related to a basic personal data and instructions for using it

بطاقة ملاحظة مقترحة لتقويم أداء معلمي اللغة العربية في الكفايات اللغوية في
فرعي القراءة والقواعد اللغوية بالمرحلة الإعدادية في سلطنة عمان

بيانات أساسية

اسم المعلم:

الجنس: ذكر () أنثى ()

المؤهل الدراسي:

نوع المؤهل الدراسي: تربوي () غير تربوي ()

تاريخ الحصول عليه:

سنوات العمل في تدريس اللغة العربية:

الدورات التدريبية التي التحق بها المعلم أثناء الخدمة:

اسم الدورة التاريخ

١.

٢.

٣.

اسم المدرسة:

الصف والشعبة:

الحصة:

موضوع الدرس:

تاريخ الملاحظة:

اسم الملاحظ:

وظيفة الملاحظ:

توقيع الملاحظ:

أخي الملاحظ:

تهدف هذه البطاقة إلى تقويم أداء معلمي اللغة العربية في الكفايات اللغوية في فرعي القراءة والقواعد اللغوية (النحو والصرف) بالمرحلة الإعدادية في السلطنة. وذلك لتحديد جوانب القوة لدى المعلم لتعزيزها، واكتشاف نقاط الضعف لتلافيها؛ مما يساهم في رفع جودة العملية التعليمية.

ولتحقيق هذا الهدف يتطلب منك - عزيزي الملاحظ - الاستخدام الصحيح لهذه البطاقة من خلال مراعاتك لما يلي:

- ١ - تعبئة جميع البيانات الأساسية الخاصة بالمعلم والملاحظ قبل البدء بعملية الملاحظة.
- ٢ - ملاحظة أداء المعلم أثناء تنفيذ درسه؛ للوقوف على مدى ممارسته هذه الكفايات.
- ٣ - يوجد أمام كل كفاية تقدير متدرج خماسي، يتضمن المستويات التالية التي توضّح مدى امتلاك المعلم لها: عالٍ جداً (٤) - عالٍ (٣) - متوسط (٢) - ضعيف (١) - منعدم^١ (صفر)، وعليك أن تضع علامة (√) في الخانة التي تعبر عن مستوى امتلاك كل كفاية. والرجاء توخي الدقة الشديدة قبل إصدار الأحكام؛ حيث إنّ الحكم الذي تصدره على المعلم يترتب عليه نتائج معينة يُحدّد في ضوءها مدى نجاح العملية التعليمية.
- ٤ - تتضمن البطاقة (١٠) كفايات لتدريس القراءة، و(١٤) كفاية لتدريس القواعد اللغوية (النحو والصرف).
- ٥ - تبدأ ملاحظة المعلم حينما يبدأ درسه، وتنتهي حينما ينتهي من درسه.
- ٦ - وضع الدرجة الكلية والتقدير العام للمعلم في المكان المخصص في نهاية البطاقة بعد الانتهاء من عملية الملاحظة.

^١ منعدم تشير إلى عدم ممارسة المعلم نهائياً لأي كفاية من الكفايات الواردة في هذه البطاقة.

ملاحظات	درجة امتلاك لكفاية					الكفايات اللغوية	م
	منعدم	ضعيف	متوسط	عال	عال جداً		
	صفر	١	٢	٣	٤		
						<p>أولاً: القراءة</p> <p>أهم الكفايات اللغوية التي ينبغي أن يمارسها المعلم أثناء تدريسه القراءة:</p> <p>يُدرّب الطلاب على عدم النطق أثناء القراءة الصامتة.</p>	١
						<p>يُكسب الطلاب القدرة على ممارسة كفايات القراءة الجهرية المعبرة، المتمثلة في:</p> <p>أ- إخراج الحروف من مخارجها الصحيحة، ونطقها نطقاً سليماً.</p>	٢
						<p>ب - القراءة الصحيحة الخالية من الأخطاء اللغوية.</p>	
						<p>ج - تمثيل المعنى المراد أثناء القراءة من خلال تنويع نغمة الصوت، واستخدام الإيماءات المناسبة.</p>	
						<p>د - الطلاقة والجرأة أثناء القراءة الجهرية.</p>	
						<p>ينمي قدرة الطلاب على استخلاص الفكرة الرئيسة لموضوع الدرس.</p>	٣
						<p>ينمي قدرة الطلاب على فهم معاني المفردات الصعبة من خلال السياق.</p>	٤
						<p>يُتيح الفرصة للطلاب لتصحيح الأخطاء اللغوية التي تصدر عنهم أثناء القراءة.</p>	٥
						<p>يشخص مظاهر الضعف القرائي لدى الطلاب بوسائل مختلفة.</p>	٦
						<p>ينمي قدرة الطلاب على اختيار الموضوعات القرائية الملائمة لمستواهم، والمفيدة لهم.</p>	٧

ملاحظات	درجة امتلاك الكفاية					الكفايات اللغوية	م
	منعدم	ضعيف	متوسط	عال	عال جداً		
	صفر	١	٢	٣	٤		
						<p>ثانياً: قواعد اللغة العربية (النحو والصرف)</p> <p>أهم الكفايات اللغوية التي ينبغي أن يمارسها المعلم أثناء تدريسه النحو والصرف:</p> <p>١. يقدّم المفاهيم النحوية والصرفية بأسلوب صحيح ومناسب لمستوى الطلاب.</p>	
						٢. يساعد الطلاب على توظيف القواعد النحوية والصرفية السابقة في فهم الدروس الجديدة.	
						٣. يدرّب الطلاب على استخراج الشواهد التي تمثل القاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية من النص.	
						٤. يتيح الفرصة للطلاب لاستنباط القاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية من الشواهد المتنوعة.	
						٥. يدرّب الطلاب على إعراب الجمل إعراباً صحيحاً.	
						٦. ينمي قدرة الطلاب على ضبط أواخر الكلمات بالشكل ضبطاً صحيحاً قراءة وكتابة.	
						٧. يعودّ الطلاب على إنشاء جمل صحيحة ومفيدة تطبيقاً للقاعدة التي تمّ استنباطها.	
						٨. ينمي قدرة الطلاب على استنباط القواعد الصرفية المتعلقة بصياغة الكلمة وسلامة بنيتها.	
						٩. يتيح الفرصة للطلاب أثناء التطبيق لاختيار النص الأدبي الذي يتضمن الشواهد التي ترتبط بالقاعدة النحوية أو الصرفية التي تمّ تعلمها.	

ملاحظات	درجة امتلاك الكفاية					الكفايات اللغوية	م
	منعدم	ضعيف	متوسط	عال	عال جداً		
	صفر	١	٢	٣	٤		
						يُدرَّب الطلاب على توظيف قواعد اللغة في أحاديثهم وكتاباتهم اليومية من خلال استعمال الألفاظ والتراكيب استعمالاً صحيحاً.	١٠
						ينمي قدرة الطلاب على اكتشاف الأخطاء النحوية والصرفية التي تصدر عنهم.	١١
						يُدرَّب الطلاب على تصويب الأخطاء النحوية والصرفية الشائعة لديهم.	١٢
						يُكسب الطلاب القدرة على الربط بين القواعد اللغوية، والفروع الأخرى للغة العربية.	١٣
						يُنير دافعية الطلاب لتعلم النحو والصرف.	١٤

الفرع اللغوي	الدرجة الكلية	التقدير العام
القراءة		
القواعد اللغوية		